

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 18 March 2020

MINUTES

Present: Councillors: P Hogarth MBE (Chairman), R Holt (Vice-Chairman), K Allsopp, A Adeyemo, S Caudwell, D Cole, Mrs D Holl-Allen MBE, Mrs K Wild and M Wilson

Officers: Andrew Kinsey – Legal Services Manager and Solicitor to the Council
Julie Cooper – Head of Corporate Finance
Adam Paterson - Finance Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs D Cole and R Holt.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None received.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020 were presented for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020 were approved as a correct record.

5. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

(Mr Russell Downing, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, was present for this item)

Members were invited to consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and make recommendations to Council in respect of the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2020-21 and 2021–22. Members questioned why there were differences in the allowances for leaders of difference size groups.

Russell Downing (Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel) confirmed that this issue did not form part of the review undertaken as members had not previously raised it. The Committee were keen to understand why this differential existed and requested a further review to look at this.

RESOLVED:

- I. That Full Council be **recommended** to approve the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2020-21 and 2021–22.
- II. That the Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to complete a further review of the allowances for group leaders.

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6. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS UPDATE – 2020/21

The Committee was invited to consider the Council's revised Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Financial Regulations and other associated guidance documents as set out in Appendices A-D to the report be approved for implementation from 1st April 2020.

7. THE EMPLOYEE JOURNEY – CODE OF EMPLOYEE CONDUCT POLICY

The Governance Committee was informed of the proposed revisions to the Code of Employee Conduct Policy and an updated Declaration of Interest Process.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Code of Employee Conduct Policy be approved.

8. THE EMPLOYEE JOURNEY – DOMESTIC ABUSE WORKPLACE POLICY

The Governance Committee was informed of the changes to the updated Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy to reflect best practice guidance and pending changes that will form part of the Domestic Abuse Bill.

RESOLVED:

That Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy attached as appendix to the report be approved.

9. THE EMPLOYEE JOURNEY – LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

The Governance Committee was informed of the proposed revisions to the Leave of Absence Policy and inclusion of provisions under the new Parental Bereavement Leave & Pay Regulations 2020 to be introduced on 6 April 2020.

RESOLVED:

That the Leave of Absence Policy be approved.

10. RIPA – ANNUAL REPORT

The Governance Committee was invited to approve the revised RIPA policy and to provide Members with an annual update on the use of RIPA powers.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That having considered the update RIPA policy, the policy be approved;
- (ii) That the Council's use and compliance with RIPA be noted; and
- (iii) That the report be approved as a formal record of the Council's use and compliance with RIPA.

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11. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Committee was asked to confirm the arrangements for the appointment of an independent member of the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That an advertisement be placed seeking expressions of interest from persons who may be suitable for appointment as an independent member of the Audit Committee; and
- (ii) That the three Councillors currently serving on the Audit Committee (Councillors Adeyemo, Gough and McLoughlin) be appointed to shortlist and interview applicants with the Head of Internal Audit and to make a recommendation to Council for the appointment of an independent member of the Audit Committee.

12. REVISED SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Members were invited to approve the implementation of temporary governance arrangements during the Covid 19 outbreak. The Committee agreed to the delegation as set out in the report and noted that the need for the revised arrangements would be reviewed every 4 weeks. In agreeing to the delegation the committee looked forward to returning to normal business as soon as possible

RESOLVED:

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive (for financial matters) and the Monitoring Officer (for Governance matters) in consultation with the Chair (or Vice Chair) to make a decision on any matter reserved to the committee that is urgent and cannot be postponed.

The meeting concluded at 19:55