

GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 19 JUNE 2017

Councillors Present: Steve Ardagh-Walter, Graham Bridgman, Paul Bryant, James Cole (Chairman), Barry Dickens, Jane Langford, Geoff Mayes, Anthony Pick and Quentin Webb

Also Present: Andy Walker (Head of Finance) and Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeff Beck

Councillor Absent: Councillor Lee Dillon

PART I

3 Minutes

The Chairman welcomed the new Parish Council representatives Jane Langford and Geoff Mayes to the meeting. Jane was a substitute on the Committee and Geoff had replaced Chris Bridges on the Committee. He also noted that Councillor Jason Collis would be replacing Councillor Garth Simpson as a substitute on the Committee.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2017, the extraordinary meeting on the 24 April 2017 and the meeting held on the 09 May 2017 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Chairman.

24 April 2017 Meeting

Item 34, Forward Plan, final paragraph:

C3260 Amendments to the Constitution – Scheme of Delegation. It was noted that this was not a duplication of C3093 Amendments to the Constitution – Scheme of Delegation (2017) as it related to the changes that would have to be made to the Scheme in 2018. It would therefore be retained on the forward plan.

Item 35 Monitoring Officer's Quarterly Report 2016/17 – Year End, Resolution:

Register of Interest Form was being revised, and would go to a future Finance and Governance Group meeting. It would be amended in advance of the 2019 election.

Item 36, Internal audit Plan 2017/18, Final paragraph and Resolution:

Audits of Shared Services - Andy Walker had raised this issue at the Berkshire Treasurers meeting on 5th May 2017 and they all confirmed that if they were lead authority for a shared service they would assess audit risks as part of their overall respective audit arrangements and would report any relevant significant risks identified to all parties.

Members were concerned about any potential liability that West Berkshire might incur in respect of the joint arrangements and sought reassurance that any liability arising from the joint arrangements were being addressed by their internal audit plans. It was therefore agreed that Andy Walker would provide the Committee with a list of joint arrangements and compare that with the internal audit plans of the relevant authority.

24 April 2017 Extraordinary Meeting

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The Chairman queried whether the Committee felt that the concerns that they had raised in respect of the New Model for Scrutiny had been adequately addressed at Full Council. Councillor Graham Bridgman commented that while the original report had not included the concerns raised by the Committee in respect of backbenchers participating in Scrutiny this had been resolved at the Council meeting. Members agreed that it would take time for the new processes to embed and success could only be measured once the new processes had time to operate for a while.

RESOLVED that Andy Walker would provide the Committee with a list of joint arrangements and compare that with the internal audit plans of the relevant authority.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

5 Forward Plan

The Committee considered the Governance and Ethics Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 4).

Andy Walker noted that as of the next financial year the Council would need to agree the Financial Statements 2017/18 (GE3327) by the end of July and therefore the August 2018 meeting would need to be brought forward.

RESOLVED that the Governance and Ethics Committee Forward Plan be noted.

6 New Arrangements for Licensing Sub-Committees (C3308)

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 5) concerning a proposal to increase the number of Members on Licensing Sub-Committees from three to four with no substitute required.

Councillor Graham Bridgman noted that those Members of the Licensing Committee who were in attendance at the informal meeting in March 2017 agreed, in principle, with the proposal to increase the number of Members sitting on a Licensing Sub-Committee from three to four (with no substitute required). This proposal would ensure that all Members of the Committee had the opportunity to sit and gain experience on Licensing Sub-Committees. It would also reduce the frustration of Members acting as substitutes who had to sit through a whole meeting but then not take part in the decision making process.

Councillor Bridgman also proposed that a similar approach be taken to the Appeals Panel as it was largely operated on a similar basis to the Licensing Committee. The only significant difference being that the Chairman of each of the Appeals Panel was actually elected at the meeting and that the Appeals Panel did not meet as a standing committee. It was agreed that Councillor Bridgman would canvass the Members of the Appeals Panel to ascertain if they supported the proposal or not.

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter noted that the number of Members was likely to decrease following the Boundary Review and he queried whether this proposal would therefore increase the workload of Members of the Licensing Committee. Councillor Bridgman explained that as the substitute Member was already required to attend the meeting it would not have any impact at all. If the substitute was not actually required to attend the hearing, in the event that the Sub-Committee was not then quorate for whatever reason, the appeal would have to be postponed which would result in additional unwanted delays for the applicants. It would not be feasible to have the substitute on standby as it was possible that it might only become evident at the hearing that one of the Members had an interest which required them to absent themselves from the

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meeting. The proposal was that the number of Members to make a meeting quorate would still be three.

Members agreed to recommend the proposal in respect of the Licensing Committee to full Council for approval. It was also agreed that a further report would be brought to the Committee in respect of the Appeals Panel.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Governance and Ethics Committee would recommend to Full Council that:**
 - 1. the Panel for future Licensing Sub-Committee meetings will comprise of four Members with no substitute required.**
 - 2. the necessary changes to be made to the Council's Constitution.**

- 2) A report recommending that the number of Members on an Appeals Panel be increased from three to four with no substitutes be brought to a future Governance and Ethics Committee.**

(The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 4.30 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature