

ETHICAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK MONITORING

Report of the County Solicitor

Recommendation: that the report be noted.

1. The Standards Committee agreed previously that the independent, co-opted, members of the Committee should attend meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and Committees on an ad-hoc basis to observe and monitor compliance with the Council's ethical governance framework, in line with the agreed protocol.
2. Members have, since the report to the previous meeting, attended the following meetings and their views/feedback are summarised below.

Meeting		Co-opted Member/Observer
Mid Devon HATOC	26 June 2017	Mr Hodgins
Teignbridge HATOC	13 July 2017	Mrs Mayes
County Council	20 July 2017	Sir Simon Day
Health & Wellbeing Board	7 September 2017	Mrs Mayes
Cabinet	13 September 2017	Mrs Saltmarsh
Corporate, Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny	26 September 2017	Mrs Mayes
Devon Pension Board	16 October 2017	Mrs Saltmarsh

3. The following table summarises feedback received from Members on a number of general issues common to all meetings

Observations:	1 = Very Poor and 5 = Very Good				
	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuality and Attendance of Members					✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
Appearance and presentation					✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
Speeches: clear, relevant, understandable, audio levels, use of microphones etc.,			✓	✓	✓✓✓✓
Use of appropriate language				✓	✓✓✓✓✓✓
Members' Conduct & Behaviour			✓	✓	✓✓✓✓✓

Clear identification and declaration of interests (<i>where so declared</i>)			✓		✓✓✓✓✓
Effective Chairmanship/conduct of meeting				✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓
Adherence to Agenda				✓	✓✓✓✓✓✓
Listening and responding to advice (from Officers)				✓	✓✓✓✓✓✓

4. While there were a number of other issues raised by co-opted members in their observations, as set out below, there were no reports of any specific actions or behaviors that might be felt to have resulted in a potential breach of the Code or warranted further action
5. Specific observations by the independent co- opted members were:
 - a number of Members were seen using their mobile phones during the meeting, whether or not that was in relation to the meeting was not clear, but it was nonetheless distracting;
 - reception staff were helpful and welcoming;
 - the proceedings were at times disrupted by the noise of building work adjacent to the Chamber, although it was not for any prolonged period;
 - a good meeting with full participation and clear speeches/questions;
 - when slides were being shown, the dimming of lights would improve the ability to read them;
 - first names were being used, which appears too informal in a Committee meeting;
 - microphones appeared difficult to switch on and one was not working;
 - an inability to see one of the name plates on the top table;
 - a sticking door which caused distraction throughout the meeting;
 - the use of mobile devices meaning several Microsoft start up 'alerts' during the meeting;
 - the presence of co-opted member was not acknowledged at the start of the meeting (although subsequent apologies from the Chair and Officer);
 - the time constraints on presentations by the public and members attending under Standing Orders shows them 'racing' through their speech making it hard to understand;
 - an item that a Member of the public wished to comment on was at the end of the Agenda (and was a very long meeting) (*NB Normally representations by Members of the public are taken at the start of the meeting, but it is understood the Chairman exercised his discretion and allowed a further representation at that point in the meeting, when the item was being discussed*);
 - a member of the public saw Councillors leaving the room for refreshments, but when they themselves went outside, the drinks had been cleared away;
 - the meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chair – the meeting appeared to obey the rules and proceeded in an orderly fashion;
 - whilst there were a number of matters where some Councillors did not agree and expressed their opinions quite strongly, although there was nothing unacceptable;
 - as appears to nearly always be the case the meeting was supported by excellent paperwork ;
 - the advice given by officers appeared to be sound, and delivered in an agreeable and comprehensible way;
 - good adherence to procedure in appointing a new Chair;
 - non-use of microphones (meeting not webcast), which caused difficulty in hearing what was said, however matters were still discussed constructively and positively; and
 - although a slightly less formal meeting in its appearance, questions were answered with a good level of detail and the meeting supported by very clear paperwork.

6. This Report has no specific equality, sustainability, legal or public health implications that have not already been assessed and appropriate safeguards and/or actions taken or included within the detailed policies or practices or requirements relating to the conduct of meetings, to safeguard the Council's position.

JAN SHADBOLT

[Electoral Divisions: All]

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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<u>Background Paper</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>File Reference</u>
Nil		