

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	Date	Co-opted Member/Observer
Public Rights of Way	15 November 2018	Mr Hipkin
County Council	6 December 2018	Mrs Saltmarsh
Cabinet	12 December 2018	Mrs Mayes
Health & Wellbeing Board	13 December 2018	Mr Hodgins
Cabinet	9 January 2019	Ian Hipkin
Children's Scrutiny	21 January 2019	Ruth Saltmarsh
Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny	14 February	Ruth Saltmarsh
Investment & Pension Fund	22 February 2019	Ray Hodgins
Farms Estates	25 February 2019	Anne Mayes
Devon Education Forum	20 March 2019	Mr Hodgins
Health and Adult Care Scrutiny	21 March 2019	Sir Simon Day

3. The table overleaf 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.
- Meeting was well chaired, with appropriate and subtle humour in places;
 - map slides were useful and informative (in addition to having them in the documentation), as this facilitated explanation and discussion.
 - ECC and DCC Members present and with no name plates it was tricky working out who everybody was, especially with many officer's present and also public presence.
 - the committee spent a significant amount of time discussing detail and issues which Councillors wished to raise, often with individual Councillors by the public. Whilst

individuals' issues are important, the Committee should be concerned with the bigger picture – in other words acting more strategically;

- there were 20 items on the Agenda might be difficult to give the appropriate level of consideration to all these items;
- Clerk was very good at giving advice on procedure when necessary and this was readily accepted;
- suggest Chair and Clerk might discuss the best ways to get some of the issues resolved outside the meeting so that the committee could concentrate on being more strategic and also streamlining the agenda so that the meeting would be a bit less protracted;
- usual difficulties with the microphones, but Chair announced that a bid had been submitted for a new system;
- forenames used extensively;
- Councillors didn't always introduce themselves;
- meeting was well organised with good supportive paperwork;
- In this Item (5) a small number of people presented their petitions to the Council.... It was good to see that members of the public were able to do this. One was the Exeter Deaf Academy Council who presented a petition asking for support for their campaign that British Sign Language Interpreters be used for the News on main stream TV News programmes. I think those young people would probably have gone back to the Academy feeling really pleased with what they had done;
- Members of the public had been told the time limit to their presentations but no indication was given publicly as to what would happen next to their petitions;
- advice sought from the Chair and the County Solicitor about the behaviour of Labour Members who staged silent walk outs apparently in protest when a particular member spoke. The Member felt it was disruptive and discourteous. Whilst not noticing how many members of the public were present, I felt it was discourteous and undignified;
- surprising that Members appeared to wander in and out of the Council meeting....including in the middle of someone saying;
- observation regarding the microphones applies only to members of the public that spoke from the table in the middle of the Daw Room. For those sitting at the back it was not easy to hear what they were saying (use of microphones by the chair, councillors and others was fine);
- less coming and going by Members than at many other meetings I have attended;
- only one person appeared to go out to answer their phone which was good;
- microphones had something of a problem in that Members had some difficulty getting them to switch on: everybody attempted to use them;
- chair started the meeting on time and explained that the order of the Agenda would be slightly altered;
- officers presented their reports and responded fully to questions from Members;
- senior officers attended for the part of the meeting in which they were involved, using their time as effectively as possible;
- No issues reported – a very well run meeting;
- No name plates;
- An "in" joke made at the meeting;
- Intermittent use of Mic's (although meeting not webcast);
- Agenda referred to Minutes on a particular date but there was a second issue which not all Members had seen;
- only one apology for absence and meeting not as well attended as it might have been;
- small number of items on the agenda;

- difficult to identify who was who in this meeting, even though name plates were used. Might have been helpful to from where the members were from and to have introduced the contributor;
 - microphone system not at its best;
 - lots of searching questions and positive suggestions and ideas;
 - meeting well chaired and a willingness to move forward in a constructive way;
 - Forenames used extensively; and
 - Speakers not always clearly identified.
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>
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Nil