

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 virtually and their views/feedback are summarised below.

Meeting	Date	Co-opted Member/Observer
Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee	12 March 2020	Mrs Saltmarsh
Mid Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (Virtual Meeting)	29 June 2020	Mrs Saltmarsh
Investment and Pension Fund Committee (Virtual Meeting)	18 September 2020	Mr Hodgins
Farms Estate (Virtual Meeting)	21 September 2020	Mrs Saltmarsh
Exeter HATOC (Virtual Meeting)	13 October 2020	Mr Hipkin
Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee (Virtual Meeting)	15 October 2020	Mr Hipkin

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.
- Some public presence and good to hear one express her thanks and grateful for the opportunity to comment.
 - An update on Coronavirus was given from the Chief Executive. There were relevant questions, but one Member appeared to express their own opinion in a rather extended fashion. The Chair intervened but the intervention was not respectfully acknowledged.
 - Timing became significantly adrift.
 - One item resulted in significant questioning. Whilst such debate is vital and can be very constructive, there were times where Members were challenging to the extent that their language and tone appeared dismissive of the speaker's contribution. There should be robust and challenging interactions

but some of the behaviour showed a lack of respect and courtesy, which is normally apparent. It was also noted one Member used inappropriate language in the debate.

- A virtual meeting and comments reflected the experience of the meeting in that everybody had managed to log in satisfactorily. Being an external participant made it slightly more complicated but efficient and effective help was at hand.
- Impressed that during the meeting, all Members appeared to be at ease with the technology and there was no problem. There was a relatively short agenda, nothing controversial and Members spoke in an orderly fashion. What I saw on my screen was one person talking at a time managed by the Chair. It would have felt more like a traditional meeting to have more people visible at the same time, rather than just the speaker.
- The meeting went well and there were no issues.
- Everybody was able to join the meeting and Councillors had been well trained and are familiar with the technology and it appears that there is always efficient and effective advice available should members have a problem;
- First part of the meeting appeared straightforward with nothing that caused much discussion or debate.
- Unfortunately, not able to observe Part 2 due to not being able to access the meeting.
- It is hoped that members feel free to say what they want to say, in the same way as they would in a face to face meeting.
- The Chair did not have an easy time, with some participating in the meeting not muting or putting their hands up/down as required, although this is an inevitable consequence of having meetings on-line;
- Participants did not at all times adhere to the Agenda, particularly as there was an apparent misunderstanding that item 5 was an overview. This did not detract from a good and informative meeting.
- The meeting was well chaired, and mercifully the technology appeared to function at all times, with members adhering to the muting/hands down requests.
- The presentations were interesting, providing useful summaries of the documentation provided before the meeting, and provoking considerable discussion on several points.

