

CONSTITUTION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Constitution and Standards Committee held in the Quantock meeting room, Shire Hall training centre, on Friday 8 February 2019 at 12.00 pm

Present: Cllr W Wallace (Chair), Cllr H Davies, Cllr M Dimery, Cllr D Loveridge, Cllr T Munt, Mr Robin Horton, Mrs Janice Middleton and Mr Wesley Wooding.

Other Members present: Cllr H Davies.

Apologies for absence: Tim Ward

49 **Apologies for absence** - Agenda Item 1

50 **Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 2

Members of the Constitution and Standards Committee declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a District, City/Town or Parish Council:

Cllr H Davies	West Somerset District Council;
Cllr D Loveridge	Sedgemoor District Council;
Cllr W Wallace	South Somerset District Council;
Mrs J Middleton	Langford Budville Parish Council.

51 **Minutes from the previous meeting** - Agenda Item 3

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2018 were accurate, and the Chair signed them.

52 **Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

There were no members of the public present, and hence no questions asked, statements/comments made or petitions presented.

53 **Changes to Financial Regulations** - Agenda Item 6

The Committee considered this report that sought to provide assurance regarding the adequacy of the current Financial Regulations following a review by the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Internal Auditor, and approval for very minor amendments.

Members noted that best practice and current Council policy required that an annual review was completed to ensure that the Financial Regulations were up to date. It was noted that the review conducted last January by senior finance staff had shown those regulations remained fit for purpose as part of the Constitution. The amended Financial Regulations were attached to the report.

There was a brief discussion of the report and the Monitoring Officer explained that small technical amendments had been made to the Constitution to update

details, such as job titles and those of Committees. It was noted that throughout the document, the term Chief Financial Officer would now be used as this had a specific meaning that referred to the statutory role, regardless of the actual designation of the postholder. In response to a question it was confirmed that there had not been any changes to those who were entitled to make financial decisions, or to the financial thresholds that applied.

The outgoing Interim Director of Finance responded to a question about the recruitment of a successor and the merits of the Council proceeding with another interim appointment. It was explained that the Council's financial situation had improved, its financial arrangements remained robust and the new Interim Director of Finance had held a similar role at a Shire Council and her appointment for 12 months would allow enough time for a new Chief Finance Officer to be recruited.

The Committee noted the report and the amended Financial Regulations were unanimously approved.

54 **Local Government Ethical Standards - Agenda Item 7A**

The Committee considered this report introduced by the Council's Monitoring Officer who reminded Members that the Council's Contract Procedure and Standing Orders (CPRSO) had been updated last May and further amended last October. He explained that the scheduled annual review had highlighted necessary amendments to Section 43 regarding Approval to Award and these would reflect the Council's '10-point plan' regarding securing a sustainable budget.

The Monitoring Officer and the Head of Commercial and Procurement provided an overview of the proposed changes, and these were to reflect the Council's increased control of spending and expenditure thresholds for awarding contracts, framework agreements and dynamic purchasing. The amended CPRSO, with amendments highlighted was attached to the report as an appendix.

There was a brief discussion of the report and it was confirmed that the Council's Governance Board had considered and endorsed the proposed changes at its January meeting. Members noted some sections of the CPRSO were grammatical amendments and changes to tense could be made to improve the document.

The Committee agreed unanimously to:

a) endorse the proposed amendment to the 2017 Contract Standing Orders to ensure consistency of policy and procedure in respect of Officer thresholds for

approval to award a Contract, Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System;

- b) amend references throughout The Rules to the Director of Commercial and Business Services and replace them with the Director of Corporate Affairs to reflect organisation change;
- c) update The Rules in line with the General Data Protection Regulations;
- d) extend the requirement for publishing Tenders and Contracts to Grants in line with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015;
- e) require all breaches of The Rules to be reported to Governance Board to provide oversight and transparency of associated risks that the Council may be exposed to prior and during a procurement procedure and in to contract delivery.

55 Forward Work Programme - Agenda Item 7

The Committee noted the report that listed future agenda items and reports for the next 3 meetings (May, June and October) of 2019.

The work programme was discussed and it was noted that the next meeting included an agenda item and report on the Council's policy for publishing audio recordings on its website.

The report was accepted.

56 Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 5

The Chair, after ascertaining there were no other items of business, thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 13:14.

(The meeting ended at 1.14 pm)

CHAIRMAN