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Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	17 September 2024
Present	Councillors Rowley (Chair), Waudby (Vice-Chair), Fisher, Pavlovic, Runciman, Kent, Chambers (Parish Council Member), Leigh (Independent Member) and Mazza (Independent Member)
Apologies	None
Officers Present	Lindsay Tomlinson, Head of Democratic Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer

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#### **8. Declarations of Interest (4.02 pm)**

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial interests or disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of business on the agenda.

Cllr Fisher noted, in relation to Item 9, Monitoring Report on Complaints Received, that he was a named party in the open complaints log. He therefore left the meeting during the discussion of that item and took no part in the discussion thereon.

#### **9. Exclusion of Press and Public (4.02 pm)**

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt versions of Annexes A and B to Agenda Item 9 (Monitoring Report in Respect of Complaints Received), on the grounds that they contain information likely to reveal the identity of individuals, which is classed as exempt under Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

#### **10. Minutes (4.03 pm)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 23 July 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**11. Minutes of Sub-Committees (4.09 pm)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the following sub-committee meetings be approved and signed as a correct record:

- Assessments Sub-Committee, 23 July 2024

**12. Public Participation (4.09 pm)**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

**13. Parish Council Visits (4.10 pm)**

The Chair introduced the item explaining that, together with the Vice-Chair, he had met with the Head of Democratic Governance and the Head of Legal to discuss visits to Parish Councils with a view to improving engagement.

The Head of Democratic Governance reported that officers were examining how to improve standards and reduce the number of code of conduct issues, noting that was already a good level of engagement through the Parish Council Liaison Committee. The Head of Legal and an Independent Person had attended a town council meeting; this had been well received and the feedback was positive. It was anticipated that this would form part of ongoing work, particularly for those Parish or Town councils that were experiencing issues.

A Community Governance Review (CGR) was overdue, this was a process whereby boundaries, wards and election patterns could be amended, and new parish councils could be established. The decision to order a review was a council decision, therefore a report would be brought to Council as soon as possible. The review would consult and work with councillors and residents in parished and non-parished areas, and culture and standards issues would also be addressed alongside the review. Timescales were to be determined and a working group, drawing from a range of council officers and resources

would be set up to manage the process and set the Terms of Reference.

In response to questions from Members, it was reported that:

- The aim was to have the changes implemented by the start of the next administration, May 2027.
- Expected levels of development, subject to the adoption of the local plan, should be factored into considerations as part of the process.
- A CGR should take place every 10-15 years and would not usually take place within 2 years of the last one, although it could be done if necessary.
- Funding options will be explored; it was not possible to recharge Parishes.

Resolved: That the Head of Democratic Governance would take a CGR report to Council as soon as possible.

Reason: To ensure that the review gets underway promptly, to meet completion target of May 2027.

#### **14. Review of Work Plan (4.43 pm)**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the current municipal year.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the following additions:

November

- Community Governance Review, Update

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

#### **15. Monitoring Report on Complaints Received (4.44 pm)**

[4:44 – 5:00pm Cllr Fisher left the meeting]

Members considered a report which provided an update on current business as regards complaints.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the committee is aware of current levels of activity.

Cllr M Rowley BEM, Chair

The meeting started at 4.01 pm and finished at 5.05 pm.