

# REVIEW OF THE TASK GROUPS REPORTING TO THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

## 1. Councillor Development Steering Group

### Members (2022-23):

Cllr Pauline Searle (chair)

Cllr Colin Cross

Cllr Angela Gunning

Cllr Jo Randall

Cllr Catherine Young

### Current Terms of Reference:

“To continue to support councillors in their ongoing development and training needs through a clear, structured Action Plan for councillor development that responds to the corporate priorities of the Council.”

### Details of general progress over the past 12 months and work to be undertaken in the next 12 months:

#### Progress:

- The Steering Group has continued to lead on helping the Council meet the standard of the SE Charter for Elected Member Development.
- At each meeting, the steering group reviews:
  - the councillors’ training and development programme
  - evaluation forms completed after each training/seminar session and recommends changes to the organisation of future events where required
  - the councillors’ training and development budget.
- Promoted the ‘Becoming a Councillor’ session on 9 February 2023.
- Endorsed the induction programme for new councillors elected in May 2023.

#### Work to be undertaken:

- To review the feedback from councillors on the effectiveness of the induction programme

- To roll out the Personal Development Plans to all councillors for completion, the results of which will inform the development of the councillor training programme moving forward.
- To review and update the Councillor Development Policy Statement
- To oversee the process of seeking re-accreditation under the South East Charter for Elected Member Development in 2023
- To continue to develop the councillor training programme including identifying shared training and development opportunities with neighbouring councils

## **2. Corporate Governance Task Group**

### Members (2022-23):

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (chair)

Cllr Nigel Manning

Cllr Ramsey Nagaty

Cllr Will Salmon

Cllr James Walsh

Murray Litvak (co-opted independent member of the Corporate Governance & Standards Ctte)

Julia Osborn (co-opted parish member of the Corporate Governance & Standards Ctte)

### Current Terms of Reference:

To examine, review, and report back initially to this Committee on the following matters:

- (a) the Councillors' Code of Conduct, including the policy on acceptance of gifts and hospitality by councillors;
- (b) the best practice recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life contained within its Report on *Local Government Ethical Standards*
- (c) the Council's guidance on the use of social media by councillors;
- (d) the revised draft Protocol on Councillor/ Officer Relations
- (e) the effectiveness of internal communications between officers and councillors; and
- (f) proposals to promote transparency, and effective communications and reporting, including the Council's Communications Protocol.
- (g) review of anomalies in the Constitution
- (h) Any other matter within the terms of reference of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee and which the Task Group considers should be addressed.

## Details of general progress over the past 12 months

### Progress:

The Task Group has already considered and made recommendations in respect of many of the items listed above in the current terms of reference. However, since June 2022, the Task Group has undertaken the following work:

- Reviewed and finalised the Protocol for Commercial Presentations to Councillors. The Task Group's recommendations were considered by this Committee on 29 July 2022. The Committee endorsed the draft Protocol and agreed that it should be included as an annex to the Probity in Planning Handbook for approval by Council.
- Reviewed the Probity in Planning Handbook. This was a significant piece of work which took the Task Group over six months to complete. The Task Group's recommendations were considered initially by this Committee on 19 January 2023, and by the Planning Committee on 7 February 2023. Comments and recommendations from both Committees were reported to the extraordinary meeting of the Council on 22 February 2023 when the revised Handbook was adopted. The revised Handbook can be found in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution and in the Guide to being a Councillor, which was included in the induction packs for councillors following the Borough Council elections.
- Reviewed the extent to which outcomes of misconduct complaints against councillors should be published. The Task Group's recommendations were included in the Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer which was considered by this Committee on 15 March 2023.
- Following on from the previous item, the Task Group reviewed the current Arrangements for dealing with allegations of misconduct by councillors and co-opted members. The Task Group's recommendations in that regard will be discussed by the proposed new Joint Constitutions Review Group.