

Nottingham City Council

Standards and Governance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Loxley House on 11 September 2024 from 2.00 pm - 2.07 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Kirsty L Jones (Chair)
Councillor Nayab Patel
Councillor Michael Savage

Absent

Councillor Saj Ahmad
Councillor Sam Harris
Councillor Helen Kalsi
Councillor Eunice Regan
Councillor Maria Watson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Jane Garrard - Head of Governance
Laura Wilson - Senior Governance Officer

13 Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved to appoint Councillor Saj Ahmad as the Vice-Chair for the 2024/25 municipal year.

14 Apologies for absence

Councillor Saj Ahmad – personal
Councillor Sam Harris – work commitments
Councillor Helen Kalsi – personal
Councillor Maria Watson – leave

15 Declarations of interests

None.

16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

17 Decisions taken under Urgency Procedures

Jane Garrard, Head of Governance, presented the report detailing decisions taken under urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) and Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13) of the Council's Constitution since April 2024, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) The Council's Constitution requires that decisions taken under urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) and

Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13) are reported to Full Council and the Standards and Governance Committee.

- (b) The call-in procedure set out in Article 11 of the Constitution does not apply where the decision taken is urgent. A decision is urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. A decision can only be taken under this urgency provision if the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair; or in the absence of both, the Chief Executive) agrees that the proposed decision is reasonable in all circumstances and that the reasons for urgency are valid.
- (c) Where it is impractical to give at least five clear working days notice of the intention to take a Key Decision, that decision may only be made in accordance with the special urgency provisions set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13 of the Constitution). These special urgency provisions require agreement from the Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (or in the absence of the Chair, the Lord Mayor as Chair of Council; or in the absence of both, the Sheriff as Vice Chair of Council) that the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.
- (d) Since April 2024 there have been five decisions taken under urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and no decisions taken under the special urgency provisions within the Access to Information Procedure Rules.
- (e) The agenda of every ordinary Council meeting includes a report informing Council of any decisions taken under these urgency procedures since the previous report. These regular reports evidence a positive trend of a significant reduction in the use of urgency procedures since the adoption of the new Constitution in October 2021, and associated strengthened training and guidance for officers and councillors.

The Committee commented that the reasons for the urgent decisions were justifiable and that the procedures have been used appropriately.

Resolved to note that

- (1) Five decisions have been taken under urgency provisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Article 11) of the Constitution since the last report to the Committee in April 2024.**
- (2) No decisions have been taken under the special urgency provisions within the Access to Information Procedure Rules (Article 13) of the Constitution since the last report to the Committee in April 2024.**

18 Councillor Complaints - Update

Jane Garrard, Head of Governance, presented the report providing a summary of complaints made about Councillors since the last meeting, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) The terms of reference of the Committee require the Monitoring Officer to submit regular reports on complaints made about Councillors to inform any work the Committee might carry out in relation to Councillor Standards and the Code of Conduct.
- (b) Four complaints have been, or are in the process of being, formally investigated due to the nature of those complaints. None have been escalated beyond the local resolution stage of the procedure. None of the complaints reached the formal stage of consideration to date and are either in train or have been resolved informally.
- (c) The timescale for complaints varies from cases to case depending on the nature of the complaint and the investigation process.
- (a) All parties are kept informed of progress throughout the process.

Resolved to note the monitoring information.