

## **EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Standards Committee held on 2 March 2021

Present

Councillor: M Johnson (Chairman)

Councillors: G Boxall (Vice-Chairman), P Davies, D Evans, M Gass and B Mouland

### **27 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **28 Chairman's Announcements**

There were no chairman's announcements.

### **29 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

### **30 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **31 Governance Improvement Action Plan**

The Chief Executive introduced the item.

The Independent Governance Review had originally been considered by the Standards Committee on 8 December 2020. Alongside the review itself, a governance update had also been presented which detailed the work carried out over the last three years to improve the council's governance arrangements. The update report also contained the initial draft action plan in response to David Bowles' recommendations.

The report before the committee set out in more detail the actions required to address the recommendations. The Chief Executive thanked the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer who had been instrumental in developing the plan along with the Head of Organisational Development.

Moving forward with implementation of the plan, the Director of Corporate Services would oversee the implementation of the action of the plan in her role as Chairman of the council's Governance Board.

The Chief Executive will report progress formally as part of the annual governance statement due to be published in May 2021.

The Standards Committee would also be updated on progress in December 2021.

The Chairman invited the committee to consider the item.

The Chairman applauded the detail given in the Governance Improvement Action Plan and acknowledged the time and work that had gone in to producing it.

The committee **NOTED**:

- a. The actions to address the recommendations made by David Bowles in the independent governance review, as detailed in the governance improvement action plan at Appendix 1; and
- b. The timelines and routes for reporting progress made against these actions, as detailed in Section 6.

### **32 Consideration of Changes to the Constitution**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the item and noted the Terms of Reference under Part 2, Section E5, Clause 2.13 'To consider amendments to the Constitution and recommend proposals to Full Council for approval except where specifically delegated to the Monitoring Officer.'

The committee discussed that a working group or liaison panel could be set up to conduct the initial process and bring drafts to this committee. The Standards Committee retaining formal decision-making powers and whether to propose any amendments up to Full Council for final approval.

Given discussions, the Chairman advised that in his view, a liaison panel would be ideal to ensure cross party involvement and he had approached various councillors in anticipation with a view to inviting them to join a liaison panel and some members included those whom had significant past experience in the formation of EHDC's current Constitution.

The committee **RESOLVED** that a liaison panel be set up to consider any amendments in the Constitution for the current year.

This was seconded by Cllr Boxall.

The committee voted on the recommendation, 6 Councillors voting **FOR** the recommendation, no Councillors voting **AGAINST** the recommendation and no Councillors **ABSTAINING** from voting.

### **33 Code of Conduct Complaints**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the item confirming that it was a standing item on the agenda to provide committee members with a general update on the management of councillor conduct complaints in train as of 1 January 2021. Members of the committee were provided with an exempt table which set out the present complaints and their general progress.

*Standards Committee (2.3.21)*

The committee **NOTED** the report.

**The meeting commenced at 17:00 and concluded at 18:00**