

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 16TH MAY, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor J Lewis in the Chair

Councillors S Arif, D Blackburn,
Amanda Carter, D Cohen, D Coupar,
P Harrand, H Hayden, J Lennox, J Pryor
and F Venner

28 Appeals against refusal of inspection of documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

29 Exempt Information - possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

30 Late items

There were no late items.

31 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

32 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor D Jenkins.

33 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on the 11 February 2022 be approved as a correct record.

34 Amendments to Councillor Code of Conduct

The report of the City Solicitor presented further amendments which had been made to the Local Government Association's Model Councillor Code of Conduct (LGA Model Code) for local councillors with a view to considering recommendations for adoption by the authority together with additional proposed amendments in response to unintended consequences that have arisen as a result of the adopted code.

The LGA Model Code was adopted by Full Council in March 2021. The new Councillor Code of Conduct took effect on 20 May 2021.

The Council became aware of amendments to the LGA Model Code after the Full Council decision in March 2021. The amendments add further clarification to the LGA Model Code.

In addition, at the request of the Leader, the adopted Councillors Code of Conduct has been further reviewed to consider any unintended consequences that have arisen as a result of it.

On 14 March 2022, the Standards and Conduct Committee resolved to recommend that General Purposes Committee recommend to Full Council that it adopts the proposed amendments to the Councillor Code of Conduct as set out in red in Appendix 1 to the report.

Following the resolution of the Standards and Conduct Committee, further unintended effects, relating to Members' Other Registerable Interests were identified and further amendments, set out in blue in Appendix 1 to the report are proposed to address these.

Group Leaders had been consulted on the proposals and had been unanimous in support. Training would be given to new Members and existing Members would be issued with a briefing note with regard to the impact of the changes.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the resolution of the Standards and Conduct Committee dated 14 March 2022 be noted.
- (2) That the proposed further LGA amendments to the adopted Councillor Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be noted.
- (3) That the proposed additional amendments to the adopted Councillor Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.
- (4) That it be recommended to Full Council that it adopts all of the amendments to the Councillor Code of Conduct with effect from 26 May 2022.

35 Amendments to Article 15 of the Constitution - Monitoring Officer authorisation

The report of the City Solicitor recommends an amendment to Article 15.2.3 of the Constitution following a review of the operation of the Constitution to ensure that the aims and principles of it are given full effect.

The recommendations propose to grant the Monitoring Officer further authority to make changes to any Part of the Constitution to those already set out in Article 15.2.3.

The recommendations are proposed having regard to the Leeds Best Council ambition to being an efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation and will reduce the resources and costs required to hold meetings to consider amendments to the Constitution where the Monitoring Officer is of the opinion such changes are de minimus and required for administrative or updating

purposes only and for which there is unanimous agreement between the Leader of each political group.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the reasons for proposed amendments to Article 15.2.3 of the Constitution as set out in Appendix A of this report be noted.
- (2) That it be recommended to Full Council that it approves the amendments.
- (3) That any amendments be reported to a future meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

36 Independent Person

The report of the City Solicitor sought agreement to an extension to the term of office of the existing Independent Person and a proposal to recruit a new Independent Person.

The term of office for Mr Gordon Tollefson, the existing Independent Person was due to expire in July 2022. It was proposed that his term of office be extended by a further two years with an option to extend by a further two subject to agreement.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Mr Tollefson's term of office be extended by two years to July 2024 with an option to extend by a further two years, subject to agreement between the Council and Mr Tollefson.
- (2) That a recruitment process be progressed to appoint a new (additional) Independent Person via a cross party Member Panel (chaired by the Executive Member for Resources and with representation drawn from the Standards and Conduct Committee) with that Working Group making recommendations to the General Purposes Committee for appointment of a new Independent Person by full Council.
- (3) That during his extended term Mr Tollefson supports the induction of the new Independent Person.