

Minutes of the meeting of the **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Thursday, 2 October 2014 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: M R Eddy
K E Morris
A S Pollitt
M A Russell

Also Present: Mr M Gillmore (Payments Manager - EK Services)

Officers: Director of Governance
Solicitor to the Council
Team Leader – Democratic Support

24 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received from Members.

25 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no notices of substitution received.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

27 VARIATION OF THE ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Chairman proposed with the consent of the meeting that the order of agenda items be varied to take Agenda Item 5 (Exclusion of the Press and Public) and Agenda Item 6 (Risk Based Verification Pilot) next in proceedings.

RESOLVED: That the order of the agenda be varied.

28 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor A S Pollitt, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business on the grounds that the items to be considered involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 7 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

29 RISK BASED VERIFICATION PILOT

The Payments Manager (East Kent Services) presented the report on the proposals for a Risk Based Verification Pilot in relation to new benefit claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support.

The consensus of opinion was to support the proposals with the caveat that a further report evaluating its performance be submitted at the end of the 6 month pilot period.

RESOLVED: (a) That a Risk Based Verification policy in relation to new benefit claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support be approved for testing for a 6 month period.

(b) That the Risk Based Verification policy be approved and the Chairman of the Governance Committee be authorised to sign the policy.

(c) That a further report evaluating the performance of the Risk Based Verification policy be submitted to the Governance Committee at the end of the 6 month pilot period.

30 RESOLUTION TO RE-ADMIT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor M A Russell, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting for the remaining business on the agenda.

31 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION 2014

The Director of Governance presented the Review of the Constitution 2014, taking the Committee through each section of the Constitution and explaining the reasons for the changes that had been made and the effects of the changes on the Council's decision-making framework where applicable.

Members were reassured that no changes had been made that would change the balance between Member / Officer decision-making.

The Committee was informed that the key focus of the Review had been as followed:

- Part 3 Responsibility for Functions – incorporating amendments required as a consequence of legislative and organisational change and reorganising the delegations to officers into a new more accessible format.
- Part 4 Council Procedure Rules (Access to Information rules)
- Part 4 Council Procedure Rules Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules)
- Part 5 Codes and Protocols (Members' Planning Code of Good Practice)

In addition there were other minor amendments made to the Constitution to reflect legislative and organisational change.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Review of the Constitution 2014 be noted.

(b) That it be recommended to Council that the proposed changes in the Review of the Constitution 2014, and specifically the delegations in Part 3 that relate to Council functions be approved and incorporated into the Council's Constitution.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm.