

GOVERNANCE REFERENCE GROUP

Wednesday, 19 February 2025

In Attendance: Councillor Radley, Chairperson; and Councillors Allard, Boulton, McLellan, Nicoll.

Also present: Vikki Cuthbert, Steven Inglis, Andy Macdonald, Martyn Orchard ,Gogo Okafor and Helen Sherrit

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Stewart and van Sweeden.

	Agenda Item	Notes of Discussion	Action/Decision	By Whom
1	Minute of Previous Meeting of 22 January 2025 - for approval	<p>The Group had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 22 January 2025 for approval.</p> <p><u>The Group resolved : -</u> to approve the minute.</p>		
2	Scheme of Governance Review	<p>The Group had before it a paper on the Scheme of Governance Review which presented proposed changes in a table.</p> <p>Vikki Cuthbert – Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Assurance), spoke in furtherance of the paper.</p> <p>With regard to the Terms of Reference, there was some discussion about businesses that had to be dealt with by Full Council and what could be dealt with by committee. It was recognised that Council meetings were very lengthy, however the Independent Councillors did not agree that a solution was to put more businesses to committees, as they were not on many committees, although it was noted that any Councillor could attend any meeting and ask questions and address the committee. The</p>		

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		<p>Group discussed more radical options, such as all votes being taken at the end of Council meetings, however noted that this would need to be carefully thought through. Other, more straightforward, options included modifying the Standing Order limiting meetings to 6 hours so that it did not include breaks.</p> <p>The Group also discussed the possibility of motions and amendments having to be circulated the day before the meeting, although this could create additional pressure for both officers and elected members and that agendas would potentially have to be issued earlier.</p> <p>The Group discussed a number of other matters, which included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputations and the requirement for requests to be 'in writing' and that this should be modified; • representation on working groups; • the number of Council meetings; • requisitioned Council meetings and associated issues, e.g. signatures and the need for a template; • the six month rule and suspension of Standing Orders; • committee visits and the scope for more committees to carry out visits; • competency of motions and amendments and whether the Convener should rule on competency before circulation; • allocation of committee places and the process therein – it was agreed that 		

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		<p>officers should not recommend specific allocations and it was for Council to determine;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Budget Protocol and the need for the Housing Revenue Account Budget to be reflected; Councillors' right to information; Declarations of interest and transparency statements and the possibility of guidance being included in the Scheme of Governance; Committee Business Planners and how questions are dealt with at meetings relating to them. <p><u>The Group resolved :-</u> to note the paper and agree that officers report to the next meeting with further suggestions based on the discussion.</p>	Officers to report to the next meeting	Vikki Cuthbert/ relevant officers
3	Date of Next Meeting	<p>The Group noted that the next meeting date scheduled on 6 March 2025 would be revised to a new date on Wednesday, 12 March 2025 at 10am.</p> <p><u>The Group resolved :-</u> to note the revised date and have the date and appointment be issued to members.</p>	Clerk to issue new appointment	Gogo Okafor