

Standards Committee  
15 June 2022

## WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on Wednesday 15 June 2022 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors T. Kingsbury (Chairman)  
J. Broach, N. Pace and P. Zukowskyj

OFFICIALS Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) (M. Martinus)  
PRESENT: Governance Services Manager (A. Marston)  
Democratic Services Assistant (B. Taylor)

---

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G. Michaelides and Councillor Bill Morris.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Councillors T. Kingsbury and P. Zukowskyj both declared non-pecuniary interests as appropriate by virtue of being Members of Hertfordshire County Council.

4. DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

Members received a report of the Chief Executive on the Draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the financial year 2021/22.

The CIPFA / SOLACE Guidance Framework emphasises that the AGS is a key corporate document. The most senior Member and the most senior Officer of the Council have joint responsibility as signatories for its accuracy and completeness.

The signatories need to ensure that the AGS accurately reflects the governance framework for which they are responsible. In order to achieve this, they are likely to rely on many sources of assurance, e.g. Chief Officers, Members, Senior Managers and the Council's External Auditors and other review agencies.

Standards Committee  
15 June 2022

As in previous years, the production of the AGS has been co-ordinated by the Governance Group, an officer group chaired by the Chief Executive in her capacity as Head of Paid Service.

During discussion, one member voiced his concern about the recent changes to the way the council undertakes procurement as well as delays to scrutiny task and finish panels carrying out their work. In his opinion the council was not embodying the second core principle of good governance, "ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement".

The Chairman confirmed that the changes to the procurement process had been discussed in a cross-party group setting and ultimately agreed by full Council. He also stated that his understanding was that appropriate action had been taken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the task and finish panels.

Whilst noting the member's concern over transparency, the Chairman expressed his view that the council was acting in an open and transparent way.

RESOLVED:  
**(3 in Favour, 1 Against)**

The Standards Committee considered the draft Annual Governance Statement and agreed it for onward submission to the Audit Committee.

5. LOCALISM ACT 2011 - APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

Members received a report of the Monitoring Officer on the proposed appointment of the Independent Person, pursuant to the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

The appointment of the Independent Person is a Council appointment but the report proposing the appointment was presented in draft to the Standards Committee, to provide any comment, before being presented to Council.

The Council last agreed the appointment of its Independent Person in July 2017. The Independent Person is appointed for a five-year term, hence the need to make a new appointment by July 2022.

RESOLVED:  
**(Unanimous)**

The Standards Committee noted the draft report and had no further comments on it, before being presented to Council.

Meeting ended at 7.41 pm  
BT