

**MINUTES OF THE CONSTITUTION AND ETHICS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 6:00PM, ON
MONDAY, 17 JULY 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Hiller Chairman (Chair), Sainsbury Vice-Chairman (Vice-Chair), Councillors Coles, Jamil, Thulbourn, Sandford and Simons.

Officers Present: Adesuwa Omoregie, Interim Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Rachel Edwards, Head of Constitutional Services
Pippa Turvey, Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager
Dan Kalley, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Charlotte Cameron, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Sue Proctor, Executive and Members Services Manager
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

Also in Attendance: Ian Forsythe, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Councillor Hogg, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alison Jones, Councillor Thulbourn was in attendance as substitute.

2. MINUTES OF THE CONSTITUTION AND ETHICS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2023, were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sandford declared a non-pecuniary interest on agenda item 6 Council Champions, in that he was the Council's Tree Champion for the Woodland Trust.

4. NATIONAL HONOURS

Constitution and Ethics Committee received a report in relation to the National Honours Awards process.

The purpose of the report was to provide an outline of the process for Members submitting National Honours applications to the Cabinet Office. In addition, Members were also advised of the King Charles III awards for voluntary service and awards for enterprise. Peterborough City Council had a specific allocated amount that could be nominated, and these were currently low for the city.

The Deputy Lord Lieutenant introduced the report and asked Members to note the report and promote the National Honours awards and consider an increase in the amount

undertaken for the citizens of Peterborough.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that the nominations should be made for people in an ongoing role, specifically for the long track process.
- In total there were 12 awards on average in each round of nominations for Cambridge with an average of around six to seven people put forward compared to one in Peterborough.
- Some Members raised concerns that Peterborough had not received a fair share of the National Awards allocated for the Cambridgeshire area.
- Councillors would be expected to promote the National Awards opportunity and highlight those residents of Peterborough that would qualify for nominations.
- Some Members raised concerns that there could be an influx of nominations, which would cause a large workload for the Honours Panel to consider.
- Anyone could nominate a candidate for the National Awards, and this would be undertaken through the long track system.
- Members commented that there needed to be clarity provided over the number allocation and expected category of nominees for National and Kings Awards, to understand and implement a process.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimous) to note the process for submitting National Honours applications and agreed that further clarification would be provided to Members in relation to the number of National and Kings Honour Award Allocations Peterborough had qualified for and categories of recipients.

AGREED ACTION

The Constitution and Ethics Committee noted the process for National Honour nominations and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously), that the Head of Constitutional Services would provide Members with:

1. The number of National Honours and Kings awards allocated for the city of Peterborough.
2. A recent list of the National Honours Award categories.
3. An update on the National Honours processes once formulated internally.

5. GOVERNANCE REVIEW UPDATE

The Constitution and Ethics Committee received a report in relation to the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Governance (CfGS) review update.

The purpose of the report was to update on the progress of the CfGS Governance review and the proposed timeline of delivery.

The Interim Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report and asked Members to note the update.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that a report on the CfGS recommendations would be provided to Committee at a later date. Furthermore, the review of the Constitution following the outcome of the CfGS recommendations.
- Members were advised that the CfGS report had been received and awaited review by the Monitoring Officer and Corporate Leadership Team. Once the report had been finalised internally, it had been planned to provide Committee with an update on the outcome of the CfGS diagnostic and recommendations made.

Constitution and Ethics Committee considered the report and noted the progress of the CfGS review.

6. COUNCIL CHAMPIONS

The Constitution and Ethics Committee received a report in relation to Council Champions.

The purpose of the report was to review the feedback and any suggestions made from the Scrutiny Committee Group Representatives as to the appointment of any Council Champions.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and asked Members to consider the recommendations made in relation to Council Champions process and appointments.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that any in year changes to appoint champions would be incorporated into the process.
- Currently the Leader appointed to Council champions and the only appointment made to date was the Armed Forces champion. There had been other Council champion suggestions, such as a Dementia, City Centre and Tree
- Some Members commented that they had preferred champions to be appointed by Full Council.
- If there had been more than one nomination made for a champion position, a vote by FC would be required to decide who to appoint. Furthermore, it was expected that there would be a good dialogue between political parties before the nominations were presented to Council.
- Members commented that some councils had appointed more than one person to a champion position, if there had been a strong interest from the candidates to undertake the role. Some Members felt however that to have more than one person appointed could confuse matters.
- Members commented that it would be beneficial to attach guidelines and a remit for all the champion positions suggested.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (5 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention) to the Council Champion appointments being made at Full Council.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Constitution and Ethics Committee noted the feedback from the Council's Scrutiny Committee Group Representatives as to the potential to appoint Council Champions and **RESOLVED** (5 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention) that:

- I. Appointments to Champion positions would be undertaken by Full Council; and
- II. Recommended that Full Council adopted the following items:
 1. The preferred Member protocol on Champions Appointments
 2. Changes to the Constitution Standing Orders to allow the appointment of Council Champions and ensure an annual review
 3. The adoption of the following Council Champions, in addition to the Armed Forces Champion:
 - Tree Champion
 - Dementia Champion
 - City Centre Champion

7. HONOURS PANEL

The Constitution and Ethics Committee received a report in relation to the Honours Panel.

The purpose of the report was for the Constitution and Ethics Committee to note that the Executive and Members Services Team were due to launch the Civic Awards (CA) 2023 process in July. Members were provided with an outline of the nominations process and advised that the nominations would be presented to the November 2023 meeting of Constitution and Ethics to consider the nominations with approval at Full Council in January 2024.

The Head of Constitutional Services introduced the report and asked Members to note the launch of the Civic Awards process.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members commented that all the nominations made should be considered by a subgroup before they were presented to Committee. In addition, the timescales to receive nominations was felt to be quite lengthy and the Committee might want to consider a shorter entry period.
- Members commented that they needed to understand the reasons behind why people had been nominated for a Civic Award, which required a cross party approach going forward.
- There had been a system of scrutiny for Civic Awards in the past, however, it was felt labour intensive and lengthy.
- Some Members commented that the nomination period should remain as three-month period.
- Members commented that it would be beneficial to ensure that the process was widely communicated to ensure that all Councillors and members of the public were aware of the CA nominations process. Furthermore, clear guidelines on the nominations criteria was needed, to improve the standards.
- The Group Representatives of Constitution and Ethics Committee could consider the first round of CA nominations before they were presented to the full Committee.
- There had been no quota for CAs accepted or rejected. In addition, there had been some CA nominations received that were not acceptable, because they had not met the required criteria. Therefore, it had been imperative to implement the right selection process to ensure a quality standard was maintained.
- Some Members felt that there could be an opportunity to put forward unsuccessful National Award nominations to receive a Civic Award instead.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the launch of the Civic Awards process and the process for the nomination selection process to be conducted by the Constitution and Ethics Group Representatives.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Constitution and Ethics Committee noted the launch of the Civic Awards nomination process in July 2023 and agreed that all nominations would be considered at the Committee's Group Representative meetings going forward, with the process to start from September 2023.

8. APPOINTMENT OF THE HONORARY RECORDER OF PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL

The Constitution and Ethics Committee received a report in relation to Appointment of The Honorary Recorder of the City of Peterborough.

The purpose of the report was for Members to consider a recommendation to Full Council for the appointment of an Honorary Recorder of the City of Peterborough. Members were provided with an outline of the role, which was unpaid and ceremonial in nature, which most councils had operated.

The Interim Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report and asked Members to consider recommending to Full Council the appointment of His Honour Judge Bishop as the Honorary Recorder of the City of Peterborough.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The appointment process would start again for the next Honorary Recorder for Peterborough when His Honour Judge Bishop was no longer in the role.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to recommend to Council His Honour Judge Bishop as the Honorary Recorder for the City of Peterborough.

9. DISPENSATION ISSUES

The Constitution and Ethics Committee **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note that there had been no dispensations issues since the last meeting on 27 February 2023.

10. REPORT ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT ISSUES

The Constitution and Ethics Committee received a report in relation to the Code of Conduct Complaints received since the last meeting held in February 2023.

The purpose of the report was to update Members on the status of any new complaints and those that had been resolved since the last meeting.

The Interim Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report and asked Members to note the report on complaints received/being handled by the Monitoring Officer since the Committee's last meeting on 27 February 2023. Since the Committee's last report there had been five new complaints received in relation to City Councillors and one ongoing complaint received in relation to Parish Councillors, however there had been no new complaints received in relation to PCs.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimous) to note the report.

11. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Constitution and Ethics Committee received a report in relation to the work programme 2023/24.

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and outlined the work programme report, along with additional items that were to be included.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that the launch of public consultation in relation to the Constitution had been placed on hold whilst the review by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) was being conducted. Furthermore, Members were advised that the Committee would need to consider the outcome of the CfGS diagnostic exercise and decide which option to take in relation to the Constitution review.

The Constitution and Ethics Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimous) to note and agree the Work Programme.

CHAIRMAN
END 19:08PM