



**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2018**

**11.00 AM (OR AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CABINET, WHICHEVER IS THE LATER)**  
**COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNTY HALL, LEWES**

**MEMBERSHIP** - Councillor Keith Glazier (Chair)  
Councillors Godfrey Daniel, David Elkin, Rupert Simmons and David Tutt

**A G E N D A**

- 1 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2018 (*Pages 3 - 4*)
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Disclosures of interests  
Disclosures by all members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- 4 Urgent items  
Notification of items which the Chair considers to be urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda. Any members who wish to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgent.
- 5 Notice of Motion: Webcasting of Scrutiny Committee meetings (*Pages 5 - 8*)  
Report by Assistant Chief Executive
- 6 Any other items previously notified under agenda item 4

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5 November 2018

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## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Governance Committee held at County Hall, Lewes on 18 September 2018.

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PRESENT Councillors Keith Glazier (Chair), Godfrey Daniel, David Elkin, Rupert Simmons and David Tutt

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Bill Bentley

### 15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JULY 2018

15.1 RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 17 July 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### 16 REPORTS

16.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

### 17 URGENT ITEMS

17.1 It was agreed that a report on a revised staff relocation and travel expense scheme, that had previously been circulated, would be considered under item 7 as an urgent item. The reason for urgency is that the proposals in the report support the social worker recruitment that is to take place later this month.

### 18 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

18.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport on measures being taken to further improve customer experience and information about the Council's performance in 2017/18 in handling complaints, compliments and formal requests for information, including the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's annual letter.

18.2 The Committee RESOLVED to –

1) note the progress of the Customer Project Board in the implementation of a series of measures to improve customer experience;  
2) note the number and nature of complaints made to the Council in 2017/18; and  
3) note the contents of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's annual letter to the Chief Executive.

### 19 RESERVIST AND ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY POLICY

19.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer regarding a Supporting the Armed Forces Community Policy.

19.2 It was RESOLVED to – approve the adoption of the Supporting the Armed Forces Community Policy as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

20 REVISED STAFF RELOCATION AND TRAVEL EXPENSE SCHEME

20.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer regarding a revised staff relocation and travel allowance scheme.

20.2 It was RESOLVED to – approve the adoption of the revised staff relocation and travel allowance scheme as set out in Appendix 1 of the report

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Governance Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2018</b>
<b>By:</b>	<b>Assistant Chief Executive</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Notice of Motion – Webcasting Scrutiny Committee meetings</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>To consider a Notice of Motion from Councillor Ungar seeking agreement to live webcast all Scrutiny Committee meetings (with the exception of confidential/exempt items)</b>

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Committee is recommended to consider the Notice of Motion as set out in paragraph 1.1 and make a recommendation to the County Council.

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## **1 Background Information**

1.1. The following Notice of Motion has been submitted by Councillor Ungar:

*"That this Council will, from the date of agreeing this motion, live webcast all its Scrutiny Committee meetings with the exception of when dealing with confidential/exempt items as directed by the Council's Monitoring Officer."*

1.2. In line with County Council practice, the matter has been referred by the Chairman to the Governance Committee for consideration to provide information and inform debate on the Motion. The Committee's recommendation on this Notice of Motion will be reported to the Council at its meeting on 4 December 2018.

## **2 Supporting Information**

2.1. The County Council currently webcasts a range of meetings to increase accessibility to the public, particularly in relation to the decision making process. The meetings which are currently webcast on a regular basis are:

- County Council
- Cabinet
- Planning Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- East Sussex Better Together Strategic Commissioning Board
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

2.2 The Council recently undertook a review of its scrutiny arrangements and introduced a new committee structure from May 2018 comprising People Scrutiny Committee, Place Scrutiny Committee and HOSC.

2.3 During the review of scrutiny arrangements Member feedback was sought to inform a range of possible changes to the scrutiny process as well as changes to the committee structure. Feedback received with regard to webcasting of scrutiny meetings fell into two themes:

- some Members felt that webcasting of meetings would restrict an open and frank debate and would potentially result in some Members and officers feeling inhibited;
- some were of the view that webcasting of these meetings would result in them becoming more politicised.

2.4 No members expressed support for webcasting Scrutiny Committees in their feedback.

2.5 A report to Governance Committee and subsequently to County Council in March 2018 proposing the new scrutiny arrangements summarised the feedback from Members in relation to webcasting and set out the proposed way forward:

*“Some Members have suggested that webcasting Scrutiny Committees can hinder effective Member participation. Cabinet and Full Council meetings are webcast and it is at these meetings where the outcomes of scrutiny work are visible and the discussion itself of greater public interest. There is therefore a good case against the automatic webcasting of meetings of the Place and People Scrutiny Committees.”*

*“HOSC, on the other hand, undertakes an important role in holding the health service to account and doesn’t report to Full Council. On some occasions, its meetings have attracted thousands of webcast views. The media and external partners regularly view HOSC webcasts due to the public interest in the subject matter. It is therefore recommended that HOSC meetings continue to be webcast.”*

2.6 The report also commented on the potential for using digital technology to support scrutiny in a more flexible and targeted way within the new scrutiny arrangements:

*“Given the now widespread access to fast broadband in the County there is now an opportunity to rethink the use of technology to assist and speed up some aspects of scrutiny work. For example, webcasting technology can be used efficiently to solicit public views as part of a scrutiny review, as can judicious use of social media. Web based surveys can now be deployed quickly and easily using applications such as Survey Monkey. Such technology has already been used to good effect elsewhere.”*

2.7 The issue of webcasting was also discussed at a meeting of the Scrutiny and Audit Chairs and Vice-Chairs in July 2018. The note of the meeting records the outcome of the discussion as follows:

*“A majority of the Group was satisfied with the current webcasting arrangements whereby the Scrutiny and Audit Committees (apart from HOSC) are not webcast but the technology is available and could be useful under certain circumstances. The current position flows from the Member comments received in the consultation for the new scrutiny arrangements which were in turn reflected in the Governance Committee report to Council.”*

2.8 As anticipated by the review of scrutiny arrangements, the new People and Place Scrutiny Committees are undertaking most of their detailed scrutiny work through sub-groups and Review Boards with the focus of the main Committee meetings shifting towards the management and oversight of the wider scrutiny work programme. Scrutiny Reviews will continue to be reported to Cabinet and Council meetings which will continue to be webcast.

2.9 A review of the websites of other top tier local authorities in the south east indicates a variety of approaches to webcasting scrutiny meetings, ranging from no webcasting to webcasting all committees. There does not appear to be a consistent approach and the availability or otherwise of webcasting does not provide any indication of the effectiveness of the scrutiny process at these authorities.

2.10 Webcasting all Scrutiny Committee meetings would be possible within the existing webcast service contract without additional cost. There would be a limited resource implication arising from webcasting more meetings as an additional Member of staff is required to attend the meeting to operate the system, along with associated preparation time. This would have some, but not a significant, impact on the time available to support wider scrutiny activity, such as Scrutiny Reviews. Unless webcasting facilities were made available in other Council rooms, it would be necessary to hold all Scrutiny Committee meetings in the Council Chamber as this is the only room currently equipped for webcasting.

### **3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1. The Notice of Motion requests the live webcasting of all Scrutiny Committee meetings (with the exception of confidential/exempt items). The use of webcasting has been kept under review over a number of years with changes made in response to Member feedback. The current approach to webcasting scrutiny flows from Member feedback received during the recent review of scrutiny arrangements as set out in this report. It also reflects the current majority view of the Scrutiny and Audit

Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Webcasting technology can be used flexibly to support effective scrutiny work and its use will continue to be subject to review in response to the changing needs and views of Members.

3.2. The Committee is recommended to consider the Notice of Motion as set out in paragraph 1.1 and make a recommendation to the County Council.

PHILIP BAKER  
Assistant Chief Executive

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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