

**EXTRACT FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON THE 20 SEPTEMBER 2011****GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE****4.00PM 20 SEPTEMBER 2011****COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL****MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Littman (Chair), A Norman (Deputy Chair), J Kitcat, Morgan, Powell, G Theobald, Hamilton, Mears, Summers and Sykes.

**29. AMENDMENTS TO CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS**

- 29.1 The Committee considered a report of the Monitoring Officer concerning some technical modifications to Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) to address practical issues around authorisation of officers, keeping of registers and extension of contracts designed to remove bureaucracy and bring the council into line with other local authorities.
- 29.2 The Monitoring Officer explained that the existing CSOs forced the council into a state of non-compliance because it was not practical for all contracts to be entered into by a Senior Officer or authorised Contract Officer; it was proposed to align CSOs with the Scheme of Delegation to Officers. It was also proposed to combine the register of declarations of interests relating to contracts with other registers of interests to create one single register, and also to give Strategic Directors the power to extend contracts valued about the EU threshold in exceptional circumstances to preserve continuity of service.
- 29.3 Councillor Mears stated that the council should maintain a register of officer interests in order to increase openness and transparency and allow members of the public to scrutinise officer interests alongside those of Members. She questioned whether all contracts were being properly supervised by procurement officers and at what point Cabinet Members became involved in the process.
- 29.4 The Monitoring Officer advised that research had shown that no other local authorities maintained a public register of officer interests, but that the Standards Committee Working Group was taking the idea forward and considering the best approach. He explained that amending the CSOs did not prejudice the ongoing work of the Procurement Strategy Manager to regulate practices, nor did it change the thresholds for Cabinet Member approval of contracts; Cabinet Members received regular briefings and could request for items to be brought before the Cabinet.

- 29.5 Councillor J Kitcat stated that he supported a public register of interests for Senior Officers and advised that work on centralising procurement was continuing, including proposals for a contracts database.
- 29.6 **RESOLVED** – That the Governance Committee recommends to Council that the amendments set out in paragraphs of the report and more particularly indicated in the appendix be approved and that they come into force with immediate effect.