

Minutes of: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 14 March 2023

Present: Councillor S Haroon (in the Chair)
Councillors S Arif, A Booth, L Dean, M Hayes, G Marsden,
T Rafiq and M Whitby

Also in attendance: Jacqui Dennis, Director of Law and Democratic Services.
Julie Gallagher, Head of Democratic Services.
Independent Persons: Craig Ainsworth and Stuart Birtwell

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor D Green

20 ELECTED MEMBER TRAINING

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

22 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2022 were approved as a correct record.

23 ELECTED MEMBER COMPLAINTS UPDATE

The Monitoring Officer presented to Members and overview of the Elected Member complaints received since the Standards Committee met in November 2022.

The number of complaints received by the Monitoring Officer in this period has been low.

The largest number of matters referred to the Monitoring officer for consideration relate to complaints from the public stating that they have not received a response from their Elected Member there were four of these complaints within this year, these matters have been resolved informally.

In addition to the formal matters the Monitoring Officer has received informal complaints by Members regarding the conduct of other Members. On the Complainants request these matters have been resolved informally.

A matter has been determined at stage 1 and the member has been directed to attend a training session with the Monitoring Officer. As a result of this finding the Monitoring Officer will be arranging a training session for all Members on interests and holding a drop in session for Members to be able to receive advice from the Monitoring Officer.

24 CONSTITUTION OVERVIEW - MEMBER OFFICER PROTOCOL

The Head of Democratic Services presented proposed updates to the Council Constitution in respect of the Member Officer Protocol.

An accompanying report circulated ahead of the meeting provided context and copies of the existing and the revised protocols were distributed.

The Council's constitution was reviewed and updated during the municipal year 2020/21. In considering the new Constitution, Members agreed that it would be reviewed annually to ensure that the changes proposed as a result of the review were fit for purpose. Following agreement at Standards Committee and Council in November 2021 Members agreed a work programme for future review; this report is an update of that programme of review.

The Protocol on Member and Officer Relations, which ensures strong governance for the partnership necessary for the effective running of a local authority, has been reviewed, and changes are subsequently needed to the constitution to ensure it is up to date.

Members discussed the protocol and the distinct relationship differences between the Officer role and the role of the Elected Member.

It was agreed:

The report be noted and forwarded to Full Council.

25 MEMBER TRAINING AND NEW MEMBER INDUCTION

Members reviewed the prepared Member training guide and plan for Member induction.

It was agreed:

The member training and member induction plan be approved.

26 CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW

Jacqui Dennis, Monitoring Officer provided Members with an update in respect of the Code of Conduct. The accompanying report sets out details of earlier reports to this Committee in relation to the LGA's revised code of conduct. The report proposes that a working group is established to consider the current code of conduct and consider whether revisions should be made. The working group to then make recommendations for a revised code to be considered by all Members at annual Council

It was agreed that:

- a. Establishment of a working group made up of Members of this Committee, the Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services.

- b. The Working party is delegated by this Committee to make a recommendation to Council in relation to the code of conduct.

27 VOTE OF THANKS

That Madam Mayor, Councillor Haroon be thanked for her stewardship of the Standards Committee over the last 12 months.

COUNCILLOR S HAROON
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.20 pm)