

Standards Committee – 3 April 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **3 April 2014** when there were present:-

Chairman for the meeting: Cllr D Merrick

Cllr R R Dray

Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill

Cllr Mrs C M Mason

Cllr M J Steptoe

INDEPENDENT PERSONS (INVITEES NON-VOTING)

Mr D J Cottis

Mr M G Drage

Mrs L Walker

PARISH MEMBERS (CO-OPTED NON-VOTING)

Cllr Mrs D Constable

Cllr Mrs L A Vingoe

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr M Hoy

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C I Black, Mrs H L A Glynn, Mrs M J Webster and P Beckers.

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Bugeja - Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

M Power - Committee Administrator

75 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

76 LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS AND DETERMINATIONS – ANNUAL SUMMARY 2013/14

Members considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services providing a summary of local investigations and determinations dealt with in the 2013/14 municipal year.

During discussion, the following was noted:-

- In respect of complaint reference SC0014/13, the use of official email addresses is now subject to Council policy.
- All of the complaints listed relate to formal submissions; there have been other concerns raised with the Monitoring Officer that have been dealt with informally. The advantage of the current Standards regime, which has now been in place for almost two years, is that it allows the Monitoring Officer more discretion and flexibility when dealing with/resolving complaints. It is a less formal and as a result often more effective way of operating than previously. A negative aspect of the current regime is that the removal of the more significant sanctions has weakened the conduct rules; the current sanctions available are not always sufficient to ensure a change in behaviour.
- The majority of cases dealt with in 2013/14 have had the involvement of an Independent Person to provide a view on how the matter should be resolved.
- In accordance with the procedures, when a formal complaint has been submitted, the subject of the complaint will ordinarily be advised of both the nature of the complaint and the name of the complainant.

Resolved

That the annual summary of local investigations and determinations for the 2013/14 municipal year be received. (HLEMS)

77 CHARTER FOR ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Members considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services on options in relation to the recommendations emanating from the assessors' report following the recent award of the Charter for Elected Member Development.

During Member discussion around the recommendations, the following was observed:-

- The assessors had recommended establishing a steering group to provide a greater focus and strategic direction for Member development. However, Members felt that this could be achieved equally well if the responsibility remained with the Standards Committee, as long as the Committee had more input into the formulation and content of the training programme. It was felt that involving representatives from all the political groups within the Council when considering training matters would strengthen the training offer. It may be useful for Group leaders to provide input on type of training their Members need. It was agreed that the involvement of the Independent Persons and Parish Members continued

to have a positive impact on Member training.

- Although it was appreciated that Personal Development Plans (PDPs) can have a positive impact on the development of Members, their introduction could be costly and time consuming. If considered appropriate in the future PDPs could be considered for those Members who would like to participate.
- Other Councils who have introduced PDPs have advised that the process can be resource intensive. It is likely, therefore, that budgetary provision in addition to the annual £5,000 Member training budget would be needed if the introduction of PDPs and/or 360 degree appraisal were to be implemented.

Recommended to Full Council

- (1) That arrangements for Member development are kept as they are currently and the recommendations coming out of the recent Charter assessment are not implemented at this time.
- (2) That the Standards Committee retains responsibility for Member training and that an arrangement be introduced whereby a representative from each political group is involved at meetings when the training programme is considered.
- (3) That the Standards Committee explores how the training programme may be tailored more specifically for individual Members' training needs.
(HLEMS)

78 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2014/15

Members considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services on the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2014/15.

Audit Committee training was requested, to cover how the audit process works within the Council. This would be aimed primarily at Members of the Audit Committee but available to all Members.

It was requested that, as part of the Fire Evacuation notice read at the start of all training sessions, participants be asked to ensure that their mobile phones are switched off/put on silent.

Ethical Framework/Code of Conduct training in Part 1 of the programme would be offered to Parish/Town Councils at no cost.

Resolved

- (1) That the summary of Members' attendance at training sessions during the municipal year 2013/14, as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report, be received.

- (2) That the proposals for the Member Learning and Development Programme for 2014/15, as set out in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.12 of the report, be endorsed. (HLEMS)

The meeting closed at 9.07 pm.

Chairman

Date

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