

Standards Committee – 11 December 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **11 December 2019** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr M J Lucas-Gill
Cllr Mrs C M Mason

Cllr Mrs C A Weston

INDEPENDENT PERSONS (INVITEES NON-VOTING)

Mr P Scott
Mr S Shadbolt

PARISH MEMBERS (CO-OPTED NON-VOTING)

Cllr Mrs D A Constable
Cllr Miss A Marriott

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs M Hoy and Mrs D Hoy

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs L A Butcher, Mrs J R Gooding, C M Stanley, Cllr Mrs M Cohen (Parish Member) and Mrs L Walker (Independent Person).

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Mrs D L Belton for Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr D S Efde for Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
Cllr J E Newport for Cllr C M Stanley

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Law	-	Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic/Monitoring Officer
M Power	-	Democratic Services Officer

227 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to noting the following:-

In respect of Minute 176/19 Local Investigations and Determinations – April to September 2019, Cllr Mrs C M Mason stated that, although in report the item was for discussion, the Chairman had determined at the meeting that the item was for noting and no discussion had taken place. It was confirmed that there would be opportunity for discussion of these reports at future meetings.

228 MEMBER TRAINING WORKING GROUP

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic on the re-constitution of the Member Training Working Group for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

By way of background information, a Member advised that during its discussion of the establishment of a working group in 2017 the intention of the Standards Committee had been that membership should be across all the political groups. The Committee had felt that, as Member training was so important, there should be input from each of the political groups.

The Standards Committee had recommended to the Review Committee for onward recommendation into Full Council; however, the intention that each political group be represented was not reflected exactly in the wording of the recommendation nor in the Council resolution.

A Member felt that the wording of the Council resolution should be taken as it was written and that it was not necessary for consideration to be given to what the intention may have been. The recommendation from the Review Committee could have been questioned at the meeting of Full Council in December 2017.

The Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic advised that, although the Standards Committee in December 2017 had intended there to be a representative from each of the Council's political groups on the working group, the minute did not reflect the intention. The definition of 'cross group' meant that there had to be more than one group represented; that is, membership must not be drawn from a single group. It was up to the Committee to determine the membership of the working group for the remainder of the current municipal year, so long as it accorded with the Council Minute. The working group, as constituted by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 20 June 2019, was not in line with the 17 December 2017 Council Minute.

It was proposed by Cllr Mrs C M Mason and seconded by Cllr J E Newport that the Member training working group for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year be constituted as follows: Cllrs Mrs J E McPherson (Chairman of the Standards Committee), Mrs D Hoy, Mrs C M Mason and C M Stanley, with an independent person in an advisory capacity.

This would satisfy the intention of the Standards Committee that each of the political groups be represented on the working group and would also comply with the wording of the Council Minute.

It was felt that it might be useful for a recommendation to be made to Full Council that in future the Standards Committee be given the power to constitute its own working group, rather than future Committees being tied to the resolution of Council in December 2017.

During discussion it was acknowledged that the Council Minute did not allow for there being more than four political groups on the Council, which would create difficulty if there were to be a change in the number of groups.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic confirmed that working groups do not have to be drawn from Members of the parent Committee; any Member of the Council could be invited to be a working group member.

It was proposed by Cllr Mrs J E McPherson and seconded by Cllr D S Efde that it be recommended to Full Council that the composition of the working group be decided and constituted by the Standards Committee starting from the next municipal year 2020/21 onwards.

The Assistant Director confirmed that this recommendation would go to Full Council on 18 February 2020 and that, if agreed, the new arrangement would take effect from the 2020/2021 municipal year. A report would come to the first Standards Committee in the new municipal year that would reflect both the discussions by the Committee this evening and the background to the intention of the Standards Committee and Review Committee that the working group be constituted from all the political groups. Nominations would be sought at this meeting for membership of the working group for the 2020/21 year.

Resolved

That membership of the Member Training Working Group for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year be as follows: Cllr Mrs J E McPherson (Chairman of the Standards Committee), Cllr Mrs D Hoy, Cllr Mrs C M Mason and Cllr C S Stanley, with an Independent Person in an advisory capacity.

Recommended to Full Council

That the composition of the Member Training Working Group be decided and constituted by the Standards Committee starting from the next municipal year onwards.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

Chairman

Date

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