

Standards Committee – 22 August 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **22 August 2023** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs D P Squires-Coleman

Vice-Chairman: Cllr R C D Linden

Cllr J L Lawmon

Cllr L J Newport

Cllr Mrs C M Mason

INDEPENDENT PERSONS (INVITEES NON-VOTING)

Mr P Scott

PARISH MEMBERS (CO-OPTED NON-VOTING)

Cllr Mrs D A Constable

Cllr Miss A Marriott

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M R Carter, D W Sharp and D J Sperring.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr I A Foster	- for Cllr M R Carter
Cllr A G Cross	- for Cllr D W Sharp
Cllr R P Constable	- for Cllr D J Sperring

OFFICERS PRESENT

E Yule	- Strategic Director
S Worthington	- Acting Service Manager, Democratic Services, RDC & BBC
V Meanwell	- Democratic Services Officer

146 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

147 LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS AND DETERMINATIONS – APRIL – JULY 2023

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director providing a summary of complaints and queries received in relation to Members' behaviour under the Code of Conduct. 4 Complaints were set out in the report. All 4 complaints were concluded.

In response to a Member question as to whether the Committee could have details as to, e.g., the complaints related to the same or different Councillors

and if the complainants were the same or different, the Strategic Director advised that although it was not appropriate to provide specific details of the actual complaints she could nevertheless provide statistical data; in this instance 2 complaints were related and 2 entirely separate.

A Member requested that in future the Committee should receive updates on any complaints made prior to the reporting period that had been resolved during that period.

In response to a Member question as to whether more details could be included in this report and as to who scrutinises the decisions taken by the Monitoring Officer the Strategic Director confirmed that it was the Monitoring Officer's responsibility to determine Code of Conduct complaints; where there was no breach of the Code it was for the Monitoring Officer to determine whether or not to involve the Independent Person. The Monitoring Officer was required to consult with the Independent Person before making a finding that the Code has been breached, which was a form of check and balance. More serious or complex cases were referred to a Standards Sub-Committee.

In response to a Member's question as to why the complainant thought there was a breach of the Code, the Strategic Director advised that appendix detailed the relevant section of the Code that potentially breached.

The Strategic Director outlined to the Committee in detail the process undertaken by the Monitoring Officer when dealing with such complaints.

A Motion moved by Cllr J L Lawmon and seconded by Cllr L J Newport that the officer's recommendation set out in the report be approved was carried on a show of hands.

Resolved

That the summary of investigations and determinations for the period April – July 2023 be received. (SD)

148 STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer seeking the appointment of the Standards Committee Working Group for the purpose of considering the Member training programme for 2024/25.

The Chairman proposed that the Committee did not appoint to the working group this evening but rather make a recommendation to Council on 7 September to appoint a working group with revised membership, namely a cross party working group of 4 named members of the Standards Committee and with some changes to the current terms of reference, given that this had not been reviewed since 2017. It was noted that Cllrs Linden, Lawmon and Sharp were all willing to participate in the working group; in addition, Cllr I A Foster advised that the Conservative Group would also like to nominate to the Working Group with the . The proposal was seconded by Cllr R Linden. This

was unanimously approved.

A Motion was moved by Cllr Mrs D P Squires-Coleman and seconded by Cllr R C D Linden that a cross party Standards Committee Working Group consisting of Cllrs J L Lawmon, R C D Linden, D W Sharp and one Conservative Group Member with revised terms of reference as set out below and this was unanimously agreed.

Resolved

- (1) To appoint a cross party Standards Committee Working Group consisting of Cllrs J L Lawmon, R C D Linden, D W Sharp and one Conservative Group Member.
- (2) That the terms of reference for the Working Group be as follows:-

To determine the Member Training Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year and circulate a report with the agenda for the Standards Committee by year end.

- Consideration given to Member feedback
- Determine any special requests from Members and incorporate as appropriate.
- Incorporate a mix of remote and in person sessions as best suited to the subject matter.
- Set appropriate provisional dates so that Member Services can include these in the 2024/25 timetable, with regard to the established procedure of one morning/afternoon session and one evening session where possible.
- To take into account the regulatory committee requirements.
- Using LGA trainers as far as practicable with in house training and other external trainers as needed taking into account both demands on staff time and budget.
- Arrange for officers to provisionally book external trainers to ensure availability.

The meeting closed at 7.57pm

Chairman

Date

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