



Minutes of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2019 at 6.33 pm.

- Present:** Councillor P Geary (Chair)  
Councillors Brackenbury, McPake (Vice-Chair), McDonald Miles (Vice-Chair), Patey-Smith, Small and Wallis  
Parish Councillors Winsor and Verma
- Officers:** P Cummins (Monitoring Officer/Acting Service Director [Legal and Democratic Services]) and T Milner (Committee Manager)
- Apology:** Councillor Darlington
- Also Present:** 1 member of the public

**ST21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 11 December 2018 and the meeting of the Sub-Committee meetings held on 16 November and 21 November 2018 be approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

**ST22 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None were declared.

**ST23 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

One member of the public was present.

**ST24 PERIODIC REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

The Committee considered the Periodic Report of the Monitoring Officer and received the following update:

- A re-hearing had been set up for 22 March 2019, and the Sub-Committee's responsibility would be to consider and agree a formality on one point of the recommendation that was quashed at the Appeal meeting on 12 February 2019. The initial Hearing to consider the complaints made against the Subject Councillor was undertaken on 16 November 2018.
- A full written response would be provided to Councillor Darlington regarding her queries about the Standards Committee's Hearing and Appeals processes. It was

confirmed that the Council did not have an Appeals process in place. Documentation could be located on the Council's website under 'Public Documents'. A revised Constitution was being submitted for approval by Council at its meeting on 17 March 2019, and if approved, the revised document would replace the previous 2014 version of the Constitution.

- As a consequence of changes being brought in by the Government later in the year on the Localism Act 2011, Hearings and Appeals processes may be dealt with differently.
- The Monitoring Officer indicated that he would liaise with Councillor McPake separately about the ongoing complaints being investigated in respect of Kents Hill and Monkston Parish Council.
- A written response would be provided by the Monitoring Officer to Councillor Darlington in respect of the ongoing complaints in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford.
- The new process in place whereby upon receipt of complaints, the Monitoring Officer consults with the Independent Person and mediates accordingly with the Complainant and Subject Councillor, the Council had seen a number of complaints finding successful outcomes, thereby avoiding the requirement of a Sub-Committee meeting to consider cases.
- The draft Minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting held on 12 February and the meeting planned for 22 March 2019 would be submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee for approval.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

**ST25**

### **REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

The Committee considered a report in respect of the Committee on Standards in Public Life from the Monitoring Officer, and heard that the Council provided a response along with many other councils. The final document was published at the end January 2019, and the Government would be following up on a number the recommendations. A meeting of the Committee on Standards in Public Life had been planned for July 2019, where the next steps and legislation would be looked at and considered, with a further meeting scheduled in 2020 to review how the new process was working.

Link: [Link to Report - Committee on Standards in Public Life](#)

The Monitoring Officer advised that there had not been any objections to the new proposals, and in particular changes to the Appeals process which would in future be handled by the Ombudsman. Committee members indicated they would liaise accordingly with their Groups on the proposed changes.

The Chair reminded the Committee that he stood by his initial comments at the start of 2018/19 year of meetings, in that the Council should be working more closely with parishes to ensure there was sufficient provision of appropriate training and support, which in turn would help resolving issues before they escalated to the point of complaints being submitted for investigation.

The Committee also heard that improved specific training for the roles of Clerk and Chair should be addressed, and in some cases Councillors. In turn, parishes and communities would be served better and it was important that the Council lead by example. The Chair suggested that the Standards Committee look at putting the changes into place during 2019/20. He was sorry for not being able to progress the necessary changes within the parishes during 2018/19.

The Chair informed the Committee that this was his last meeting as Chair and indicated he would particularly like to see more work done with the parishes during 2019/20. He further indicated that the Committee had an opportunity to further improve the liaison with, workings and support provided to parishes to avert potential issues before escalating further.

The Committee members thanked Councillor Geary for being Chair during 2018/19 and welcomed his valued input during 2019/20.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

**ST26**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

That the next meeting of the Standards Committee was provisionally scheduled for Tuesday 2 July 2019 at 6.30 pm.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.00 PM