



Minutes of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2019 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Miles (Chair)
Councillors Khan, McPake (Vice-Chair), Raja, Reilly (substitute for Councillor Alexander) and Small

Officers: S Bridglalsingh (Director - Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer), P Cummins (Head of Legal Services / Deputy Monitoring Officer) and J Crighton (Committee Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Akter, Alexander, P Geary (Vice-Chair) and Wilson and Parish Councillors Verma and Winsor

Also Present: 2 members of the public

ST10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 9 July 20 19 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

ST12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None disclosed.

ST13 PERIODIC REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

The Committee considered the periodic report of the Monitoring Officer.

The Committee noted the number of outstanding complaints, together with those that had been completed, for the period July to September 2019.

The Committee expressed concern about the costs involved in investigating complaints. The Deputy Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the costs included the use of an external investigator.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the difference in costs for investigating each complaint, as outlined in Annex A to the report, reflected the use either of an investigator from a local authority or a solicitor from private practice if a local authority did not have the capacity to carry out the investigations.

The Committee received an update following the training for members of the Committee held on 25 July 2019 and 13 August 2019.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that a training video was in the process of being produced which would be useful for parish councils and would be available to the Committee for comments before wider use.

The Committee noted the contents of the Open Letter from Jonathan Evans, Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, which outlined the importance that high standards were not only consistently observed, but also demonstrably valued and the tone of public debate should avoid abuse and intimidation.

RESOLVED -

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Deputy Monitoring Officer be requested to find out when the training video for parish councils and Borough Councillors would be available.

ST14

STANDARDS WORKING GROUP UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered an update on the work of the Standards Working Group.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that the Working Group had agreed to retain the Appeals Process, but further work should be carried out to ensure that, in the event of a Standards Sub-Committee hearing, the hearing procedures to be followed were clear.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that the Working Group had considered the Best Practice Recommendations on Standards in Public Life, and a consultation with parish councils and each political group on the Council had commenced. A report on the final recommendations would be brought to the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 10 December 2019.

The Committee noted that feedback from parish councils had been relatively poor and the deadline for responses had been extended to 31 October 2019.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

ST15

WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2019/20.

RESOLVED -

That the Work Programme be noted.

ST16

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Standards Committee would be held on Tuesday 10 December 2019 at 6.30 pm.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 6.50 PM

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