

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of this Committee held on
1 July 2019

(Present) Councillor Bond, J Jackson, Jones, Murphy, Pritchard and Quinn.

(Not Present) Councillors Groucutt, D Long, Sims and Sweeney

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

- * **Resolved that Councillor Bond be appointed Chairman.**

Councillor Bond here took the Chair.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Groucutt and Sims.

3 MINUTES

- * **Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2019 be approved and signed.**

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

No Declarations of Interest from Members were made.

5 OMBUDSMAN CASES 2019/20

A report was submitted which informed the Committee of Ombudsman cases from 1 April 2019 to 31 May 2019.

The report summarised the number of complaints against the Council determined by the Ombudsman which were explained by the Monitoring Officer.

- * **Resolved that the report be noted.**

6 MEMBERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

A report was submitted which informed Members of a summary of the Training and Development Courses offered to Members from 1 January 2019 to 18 June 2019.

The Member Training and Development Events Report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Member Training had always been promoted and supported as an effective way to ensure that Members were properly equipped to fulfill the wide-ranging important roles required of them.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Members stressed the importance to attend training provided on the role of Corporate Parenting. The Monitoring Officer would forward comments to the Senior Assistant Director, Children's Services.

* **Resolved that the report be noted.**

7 **UPDATE ON REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED MEMBERS/PLANNING PROTOCOL/MEMBER-OFFICER RELATIONS PROTOCOL**

A report was submitted which updated Members on the progress of the review of the following documents and proposed changes agreed by Standards Committee on 2 April 2019:

- Code of Conduct for Elected & Co-Opted Members;
- Protocol for Councillors and Officers dealing with Planning Matters (Planning Protocol); and
- Protocol on Member / Officer Relations

The review was supported by David McGrath of Link Support Services, who delivered the Code of Conduct training to Members in October 2018. He had reviewed the Council's current documents and benchmarked them against other local authorities.

The best practice recommendations set out in the recent Committee on Standards in Public Life ("CSPL") Review report have informed the review. Standards Committee considered a report on the CSPL recommendations at its meeting on 2 April 2019.

At the meeting of Annual Council on 22 May 2019, it was agreed to defer the report on the proposed changes to a future meeting of Council to enable new members and new political groups to consider them.

In order to enable new Members and new political groups to consider the proposed changes, it was recommended that a cross-party working group be formed from the membership of Standards Committee, including a representative from each political group to meet in July 2019. A further update would be provided to Members of the Standards Committee on the outcome of the considerations of the Working Group with a view to the proposals being recommended to Council for adoption in due course.

The Committee was invited to nominate members from Standards Committee to form a cross-party working group, including a representative from each political group, to meet in July 2019 to consider the proposed changes to the following documents with a further update provided to Standards Committee in due course.

* **Resolved that a cross-party working group made up of Members from the Standards Committee and a representative from each political group to meet in July 2019 to consider the proposed changes to the following documents with a further update provided to Standards Committee in due course:**

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- **Code of Conduct for Elected & Co-Opted Members**
- **Protocol for Councillors and Officers dealing with Planning Matters (Planning Protocol)**
- **Protocol on Member / Officer Relations**

8 UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS

A verbal report was made by the Monitoring Officer which updated the Committee on complaints received alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct. Council had delegated powers to the Monitoring Officer to consider complaints and determine if they should be the subject of a full investigation.

Since the last update provided at the meeting in January, the Monitoring Officer had resolved nine complaints against Members which had been dealt with under delegated powers. Out of the nine complaints, three did not progress to investigation as there was no apparent breach of the Code, two related to matters which did not appear to be whilst acting in the capacity of a councillor and four complaints were resolved by alternative resolution with informal advice given relating to obligations under the Code of Conduct. There was one live complaint under consideration

- * **Resolved that the verbal update be noted.**

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