

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of this Committee held on  
14 January 2019

**(Present)**            **Councillor Roberts (Chairman)**  
**Councillors Deakin, J Jackson, P Jackson, J Johnson,**  
**Maloney MBE and Sims**

**(Not Present)**    **Councillors De'Asha, Jones and Murphy.**

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### **8        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors De'Asha, Jones and Murphy.

### **9        MINUTES**

\*        **Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2018 be approved and signed.**

### **10      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

No Declarations of Interest from Members were made.

### **11      LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2017/18**

A report was submitted which informed the Committee of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2017/2018.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) provided an Annual Review Letter to each Council to help inform Members of their respective Council's performance in relation to complaints. A copy of the letter was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Annual Review Letter provided information in relation to the number of complaints received by the LGSCO in the 12-month period ending 31 March 2018, as well as the decisions reached by the LGSCO in the same period. Members noted that in that period, eight complaints were upheld.

The significant challenges facing the Council in terms of budget reductions meant that it was harder to continue to meet expectations and could impact on the scope for and level of complaints. The Council continued to treat all complaints seriously and ensures we take on board any learning points and make necessary changes to processes where appropriate.

The Monitoring Officer outlined the comparative figures for previous years and gave an update to Members in respect of one Ombudsman case referred to in the report where Council had originally not accepted the recommendations but following a report to Cabinet in September 2018 had agreed to accept the recommendations.

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

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### 12 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS 2018/19

A report was submitted which informed the Committee of Ombudsman cases from 1 June 2018 to 30 November 2018.

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.**

### 13 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 July 2018 to 31 December 2018.

A Councillor 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.

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

### 14 COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE – REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS

A report was submitted which provided an update on the review of local government ethical standards by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (“CSPL”) advised the Prime Minister on ethical standards across the whole of public life in England. It monitors and reports on issues relating to the standards of conduct of all public office holders. CSPL was an independent advisory non-departmental public body. It was also responsible for promoting the Seven Principles of Public Life.

During 2018, the CSPL had undertaken a review of local government ethical standards. Members were informed that the findings should be published on 30 January 2019 and the Monitoring Officer would keep Members updated.

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

### 15 REVIEW OF CODE CONDUCT FOR ELECTED AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS, PLANNING PROTOCOL AND PROTOCOL ON MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONS

A report was submitted which informed Members that the Monitoring Officer had recently started a review of the following:

- Code of Conduct for Elected & Co-Opted Members;
- Planning Protocol; and
- Protocol on Member / Officer Relations

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Robust standards arrangements were necessary to safeguard local democracy, maintain high standards of conduct, and to protect ethical practice in local government.

The documents under review form part of the Constitution and had not been reviewed in a number of years.

All elected Members were invited to mandatory Code of Conduct training in October 2018. A number of issues were highlighted during the training which would be addressed as part of the review to ensure the documents were relevant and up-to-date.

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

Councillor Maloney MBE here entered the meeting.

### **16 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 meeting, the Monitoring Officer had received nine complaints against Members which had been dealt with under delegated powers.

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

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