

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 1 JULY 2020

Present:

Councillor William Armitage (Chair)
Councillor Pat Kerry (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Pat Antcliff
Councillor Jacqueline Ridgway
Councillor Diana Ruff

Councillor Heather Liggett
Councillor Kathy Rouse
Councillor Ross Shipman

Also Present:

S Sternberg	Joint Head of Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer
V Dawson	Solicitor – Team Manager (Contentious) & Deputy Monitoring Officer
N Calver	Governance Manager
A Bryan	PA to Cabinet and Civic Officer

STA/1/20-21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Roe and Parish Councillors P Coleman and D Skinner.

STA/2/20-21 Declarations of Interest

Members are requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or other interests, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

STA/3/20-21 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 19 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

STA/4/20-21 Emergency Delegations

The Monitoring Officer provided a verbal update on the emergency delegations that had been in use during the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. A report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee which would detail the use of the emergency delegations.

The Monitoring Officer explained that as the country went into lockdown it became clear that it would not be possible to hold Member meetings for a time. A list of emergency delegations had been put

together in order to keep the business of the Council running when it was not possible to hold meetings. These emergency delegations had initially been granted for three months, and had then been renewed until 31 July 2020 and the Monitoring Officer explained that she would be seeking to have them extended further, as a back up to the virtual meetings that were currently being held.

The list of emergency delegations included: contracts and contract variations; disposal of land above the key decision threshold; licensing functions; approval of policies and strategies; approval of the annual governance statement and statement of accounts; write off of debts above £3500; non-attendance by Councillors for six months; changes to the schedule of Council meetings; and changes to the constitution. There were also specific delegations to enable Environmental Health to deal with Covid-19 regulations and enforcement. Also, during this time the new Director of Growth and Economic Development had joined the Council and appropriate delegations had been transferred to this post.

RESOLVED – That the update on emergency delegations be noted.

STA/5/20-21 Review of the Constitution - Part 1

The Standards Committee considered a report which set out areas for review within the Council's Constitution for consideration by the Standards Committee prior to submission as part of the annual review of the Constitution to Council for adoption.

The Governance Manager explained that one of the primary functions of the Standards Committee was to undertake an annual review of the Council's Constitution to ensure that it was up-to-date and in line with legislation and current circumstances. Members noted that the following areas had been identified for review:-

- Housing Management Board Terms of Reference
- Town Fund Board Terms of Reference
- Contract Procedure Rules – Contract Formalities
- Employee Code of Conduct/Employment Rules
- JCG Terms of Reference
- Planning Protocol
- Minor wording changes or updating of job titles (housekeeping)

It was suggested that this year two sets of revisions would be taken to Council, the first in November 2020 and the second in May 2021.

The Committee was asked to give consideration to the following proposals for review outlined in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report.

(a) Housing Management Board Terms of Reference

The Committee was asked to consider minor amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Housing Management Board.

(b) Town Fund Board Terms of Reference

The Committee was asked to consider minor amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Town Fund Board.

(c) Areas of the constitution approved directly by Council

In addition to the areas for review, during the pandemic a number of changes had been taken directly to Council for incorporation in the constitution and bypassed the Committee. These items, details of which were set out in Appendix 3 to the report, included:-

- Virtual Meeting Standing Orders
- Disestablishment of the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee (SAJC)
- Calendar of Meetings Approval
- Delegations Scheme (Chief Officers)
- Planning Committee Terms of Reference
- Planning Protocol
- Minor Wording Changes or updating job titles (housekeeping)

It was reported at the meeting that in respect of the changes to the participation of Ward Members at Planning Committee these changes had been rescinded by delegated decision in advance of the Planning Committee meeting held on 30 June 2020. It was expected that this issue would be considered at a special meeting of Standards Committee in September 2020.

Cllr R Shipman requested that the proposer of any changes was identified when the proposals were brought to the Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee:-

- (1) Approved and submits to Council amendments to the Strategic Housing Management Board and the Town Fund Board Terms of Reference, as part of the Constitution Mid-Year Review in November 2020.
- (2) Noted the changes to the constitution that had been approved directly by Council.

STA/6/20-21 Gifts and Hospitality Review 2019

The Gifts and Hospitality Review was withdrawn.

STA/7/20-21 LGA Model Code of Conduct Consultation

The Standards Committee considered a report that informed the Committee of the Local Government Association's (LGA) current consultation on a model member code of conduct.

The Local Government Association was providing a model member code of conduct as part of its work on supporting the sector to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. The LGA had published a model member code of conduct for consultation. The consultation opened on Monday 8 June and would close on Monday 17 August.

The draft model member code of conduct that was the subject of the consultation was attached to the report at Appendix 1. A comparison between the Council's member code of conduct and the consultation model member code of conduct had been made and this was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The outcome of the consultation and the final version of the model member code of conduct would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the LGA consultation on the model member code of conduct be noted.

STA/8/20-21 Work Programme 2020-21

Members gave consideration to the Work Programme for the Standards Committee for the municipal year. Members were reminded that this was a live and changing document and could be adapted to the needs of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme for 2020/21 be noted.

STA/9/20-21 Urgent Business (public session)

Members were advised that there was no urgent business to be discussed at this meeting of the Standards Committee.