

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2021

Present:

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

Councillor Nigel Barker
Councillor Heather Liggett
Councillor Richard Welton

Councillor Pat Kerry
Councillor Kathy Rouse
Pat Coleman - Parish Council
Representative

Also Present:

S Sternberg	Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
K Shillitto	Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer
R Pope	Customer Services Manager
N Calver	Governance Manager
A Bond	Governance Officer

STA/ Apologies for Absence

9/21-
22

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors D Ruff, D Hancock and Parish Council Representative D Skinner.

STA/ Declarations of Interest

10/2
1-22

Members were 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 this meeting.

STA/ Minutes of Last Meeting

11/2
1-22

It was noted that Councillor Antcliff was now the Vice Chair of the Standards Committee.

Committee was made aware that Councillor Pat Coleman had attended the previous meeting and heard that the Minutes would be amended accordingly.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on the 30 June 2021 be approved as a correct record, subject to the above amendments, and signed by the Chair.

STA/ Change in Order of Agenda Items

12/2

1-22 RESOLVED – It was agreed by the Chair that the order of the agenda be changed, and that the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter would be considered first.

STA/ Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter

13/2

1-22 The Customer Services Manager presented a report on the Annual Review letter of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGO).

The Council had received its Annual Review Letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman on the 21st July 2021. There were 13 complaints and enquiries received in total by the LGO. Six required a decision to be made by the LGO. Out of these 13; three were not investigated; four complaints were not received by the District Council; one related to a premature complaint and was referred back for local resolution; three complaints were not in scope with the Council's policy as they related to Rykneld Homes; and two complaints were UPHELD by the LGO.

This year's performance compared less favourably than the previous year's performance when two complaints were closed after initial enquiries, two were not upheld and one was referred back for local resolution.

Committee heard that the data would be uploaded to the LGO website where the performance of all Councils could be seen.

Members also heard about measures put in place to ensure that the Council maintains a customer friendly and robust Compliments, Comments and Complaints process. These included mandatory training across the organisation, periodically reviewing the Complaints Process, and ensuring that Officers completed a quality assurance document.

Committee congratulated those involved for their work on this.

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee acknowledged the report and findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

STA/ Member Training Attendance

14/2

1-22 Standards Committee received a report that summarised the attendance by Councillors at recent training sessions. This highlighted the training which had been provided during May and June 2021 as part of the mid-term training programme delivered in conjunction with Bolsover District Council (BDC).

Members had a wide ranging discussion over the attendance figures including the lack of attendance at the final event and the low figures for the mandatory training events. It was agreed that Members should consider holding the events again in the New Year.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the information on Member training attendances.

STA/ Code of Conduct Training Update

15/2

1-22

The Joint Head of Service for Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer provided Committee with an update on the Parish and District Code of Conduct Training Sessions.

Members heard that the dates had all been organised and that some of the Parish sessions had already been held. Members were asked to promote the training sessions throughout their Parishes in order to increase attendance.

STA/ Update on the Delegation Scheme

16/2

1-22

Standards Committee received an update on the Delegation Scheme.

Members heard that the Delegation Scheme had been revised under delegation to ensure that relevant delegations could still be legally and properly used with the changes made so far. The revised Delegation Scheme only allocated existing delegations to officers in the new structure. There were no new delegations.

It would be necessary to undertake a full review, including consideration of what additional delegations would be required, and for these to be built into the new Delegation Scheme once the Senior Management Review was completed.

The Monitoring Officer would bring a revised Delegation Scheme to the next meeting of Committee for consideration, provided that the review itself was completed.

RESOLVED – That the Delegated Decision aligning the Delegation Scheme to the new Senior Management Structure is noted and that a new draft Delegation Scheme is brought to Committee when the Senior Management Review is completed.

STA/ Review of the Constitution - Part 2

17/2

1-22

The Governance Manager presented a report which outlined a list of 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.

Members heard that there were four areas being considered. These were; Review of Guidance and Constitutional Rules on Public Speaking at Council; Training Requirements for Councillors; Renumbering of the Articles and; Delegation Scheme – Property Sale.

Members were also shown the essential training schedule should they wish to make any alterations.

Members discussed the review of the constitution and inquired as to a right of appeal under section 9.2 of the Council Procedure Rules. Committee heard

that there was no formal right to appeal but the Monitoring Officer would accept and look into each argument on a case by case basis.

RESOLVED – That the Committee gave consideration to proposals for review and supported the submission of proposals to Council as part of the Constitution Review at a future meeting.

STA/ **Complaints Update**

18/2

1-22

Committee received a verbal update from the Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer on Member Complaints.

It was reported that there were currently ten complaints, five of these were still open. Out of these ten, four were related to parish councils, five related to the District Council, and one was for both the Parish and District Councils.

STA/ **Work Programme**

19/2

1-22

Members gave consideration to the Work Programme for the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

Members heard that the 19 January meeting had moved to the 26 January.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be noted.

STA/ **Urgent Business (public session)**

20/2

1-22

There was no urgent business discussed at the meeting.

STA/ **Exclusion of Public**

21/2

1-22

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following items of business to avoid the disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

STA/ **Parish Council Representatives**

22/2

1-22

Members discussed the attendance of Parish Council Representatives at meetings.

RESOLVED – That Committee would write to the Member in question and invite them to attend the next meeting of Council.