

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2022

Present:

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

Councillor Kevin Gillott
Councillor Heather Liggett
Councillor Richard Welton

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

Trevor John Collins - Parish Council
Representative

Also Present:

L Ingram Legal Team Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer
A Bond Governance Officer
A Maher Interim Governance Manager

STA/ Apologies for Absence

22/2

2-23 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Ruff and D Hancock.

STA/ Declarations of Interest

23/2

2-23 There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

STA/ Minutes of Last Meeting

24/2

2-23 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 2 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

STA/ Review of the Constitution

25/2

2-23 Members heard that the Stage One Review of the Constitution had been completed and any typographical errors had been corrected.

Members were reminded that there would be a further two stages to the review of the constitution. The next stage would consider how Councillor Roles and Responsibilities, the Code of Conduct and acceptable behaviour ought to be reflected in the Council's Constitution.

Standards Committee heard that two informal workshop style discussion sessions would be arranged in January and March in order to discuss these two stages.

Members discussed the Review of the Constitution and considered that a hard copy document that highlighted the tracked changes and which aspects of the Constitution were driven by legislation would be useful.

Committee suggested that it could be beneficial for conversations to take place with relevant Group Leaders in the event that a different approach was taken after the next election.

Members considered that having one of the workshop sessions in March could be too close to the election period.

RESOLVED – That Standards Committee noted the Stage One updates to the Constitution.

STA/ **RIPA Annual Review**

26/2

2-23

Committee were updated on the use of RIPA powers over the last year. They noted that the powers had not been used since 2010.

Members heard that the Office of Surveillance Commissioners last inspected the Council this year, 2022, and the next inspection would not take place for another two years. The outcome of the Inspection was overall very positive.

Committee were informed that a Corporate Facebook account for the purpose of investigations had been created and was being trialled. A report would be presented in the New Year on its use and effectiveness.

Training had been carried out by an external provider and it was proposed that refresher training would be carried out by June 2023.

RESOLVED – That Standards Committee noted the update provided on the use of the policy.

STA/ **Whistleblowing Policy Review**

27/2

2-23

Members received an update on the use of the Whistleblowing Policy. They heard that the policy was last reviewed in January 2022 and remained fit for purpose.

There were no instances of whistleblowing to report to Members.

RESOLVED – That Standards Committee:

- (1) Agreed the current Whistleblowing Policy was fit for purpose.
- (2) Noted that no instances of Whistleblowing had been made since the 2022 Annual Review of the Whistleblowing Policy.

STA/ **Schedule of Meetings 2023/24**

28/2

2-23

Standards Committee received a draft copy of the 2023/24 schedule of meetings.

Members discussed the draft schedule of meetings and considered that it could be beneficial to include Rykneld Homes Ltd operational and main board meetings within the schedule. It was also suggested that some meeting dates

could need reviewing due to their proximity with the May elections.

Committee welcomed the idea of having multiple meetings on the same day.

Standards Committee thanked the Interim Governance Manager for their work on the draft schedule of meetings.

STA/ **Member Development Update**

29/2

2-23

Members received a verbal update on Member Development.

They heard that Prevent Training would be included on the induction programme and that this would either be delivered via a specific session or in conjunction with officer training.

Members discussed the nature of attendance at training events and heard that it was a matter for each individual Group Leader as to whether or not to enforce attendance at mandatory training sessions within their Groups.

Officers emphasised that all Members had received training on safeguarding and ethics.

STA/ **Civility and Respect in Local Councils**

30/2

2-23

Committee considered the Civility and Respect Pledge for Parish and Town Councils produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

Members heard that NALC and SLCC had also produced guidance for Town and Parish Councils on the use of social media responsibly and as a local Councillor.

Committee discussed the pledge and enquired as to how social media could be policed and if there was any protection for Councillors against untrue and distressing comments, especially those made by other Councillors. They were referred to the Council's social media policy, contained within the Constitution.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) The Chair and Monitoring Officer write to all Local Councils encouraging them to take the Civility and Respect pledge.
- (2) That the Chair and Monitoring Officer write to all Local Councils encouraging them to introduce social media guidance for Councillors based on the Civility and Respect Guidance.
- (3) That this is repeated following the May 23 elections.

STA/ **Complaints Update**

31/2

2-23

Committee received an update on the number of complaints that have been received and what action had been taken on these.

Members heard that five new complaints had been received and one existing complaint had been closed. There were a total of eight active complaints.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

STA/ Work Plan

32/2

2-23 RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.

STA/ Urgent Business (public session)

33/2

2-23 There was no urgent business.