

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 27 JULY 2023

Present:

Councillor Kevin Gillott (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Helen Wetherall (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Pat Antcliff
Councillor Fran Petersen

Councillor Pat Kerry
Councillor Kathy Rouse

Also Present:

S Sternberg	Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
D Thompson	Assistant Director of Planning
A Maher	Governance Manager
A Bond	Governance Officer

STA/ Apologies for Absence

1/23-
24

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor C Cupit.

STA/ Declarations of Interest

2/23-
24

There were no declarations of interest.

STA/ Minutes of Last Meeting

3/23-
24

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 19 April 2023 be noted.

STA/ Change of Order of Agenda Items

4/23-
24

The Chair, in agreement with other Members of the Committee, changed the order of the agenda items as set out within these Minutes.

STA/ Review of the Constitution - Speaking at Planning Committee

5/23-
24

The Assistant Director Planning introduced the report on the Review of the Constitution. The report gave information so that Members could consider whether to impose limits on the number of speakers at Planning Committee.

The Assistant Director explained that a reduction in the number of speakers would not hinder debate or reduce representation as applications would still receive representations and comments from residents. Placing a limit on the number of speakers would prevent meetings from overrunning and ultimately the Chair would hold discretion and the flexibility to exercise their judgement on how many people could speak when appropriate.

Members discussed the report at length. Key aspects of their discussion included the average number of speakers that attended meetings of the

Planning Committee, ways in which the speakers could organise themselves in order to reflect all residents' viewpoints and, the importance of acting fairly towards residents and the community.

Committee considered that ward Members should retain the ability to speak on an application irrespective of other limitations on the number of speakers.

Members agreed that, aside from ward Members, the number of speakers should be limited to a maximum of three for and three against the application as a general rule.

Members were in agreement that Planning Committee should retain the power to regulate itself on the day of the meeting and that ultimately any restrictions could be altered at the Chair's discretion.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That following from Annual Council's consideration of the proposed Constitution, Standards Committee reconsidered section 16.1 and recommended to Full Council that it would be appropriate to impose limits on the number of speakers at meetings of Planning Committee.
- (2) That the following be recommended to Full Council:
 - a. That Ward Members should retain the ability to speak on an application irrespective of any other limitations placed on the number of speakers.
 - b. That, aside from Ward Members, the number of speakers should be limited to a maximum of three for and three against the application.
 - c. That speakers should continue to be permitted to speak for up to a maximum of three minutes each.

STA/ Values in the Constitution

**6/23-
24**

Members received a report which introduced a fifth value into the Constitution. The proposed additional value was intended to represent the view of the new Administration that the Council's business should be dealt with as openly and transparently as possible by: *Being Collaborative, open and transparent*.

They heard that the report would be voted on for approval at the next meeting of Council.

Committee considered that the introduction of the new value would be a positive benefit for the Council as a whole.

RESOLVED – That Council be recommended to approve the addition of the fifth value to the Constitution.

STA/ Scrutiny Terms of Reference

**7/23-
24**

Members considered the draft Terms of Reference and Scrutiny Protocol.

Committee considered that the Terms of Reference could have included more information on community safety but noted that the Scrutiny Committees themselves had approved the documents.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Committees Terms of Reference and Scrutiny Protocol be recommended to Council for approval and inclusion in the Constitution in place of the existing Terms of Reference.

**STA/
8/23-
24**

Code of Corporate Governance

Committee was presented with the 2023 Code of Corporate Governance. This formed part of the Annual Governance Statement. Members were made aware that a major review of the Code would be carried out in 2025.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) Members considered and commented upon the Code of Corporate Governance.
- (2) Any comments are passed to the Audit Committee for inclusion in the Code of Corporate Governance which accompanies the Annual Governance Statement.

**STA/
9/23-
24**

Parish Council Representatives on Standards Committee

Members discussed recruitment of new Parish Council representatives to the Committee.

An alternative method for selecting the representatives was proposed in order to prevent them both being from the same Parish Council.

Committee discussed the report in detail. They considered that the selection methods should be re-visited in future in order to improve the selection process.

Members considered that the selected Parish Representatives should have staggered end times so that the first representative would remain in post until 2027 and the later till 2025.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) Members decided that the two Parish Council representatives should be selected in the following way:
 - a. Each Parish Council would be asked if they wish to put forward a Member of the Parish Council as a Parish Council representative.
 - b. The Chairman of Standards Committee be asked to pick two names from a ballot box as the representatives of the Parish Councils on the Standards Committee
 - c. That the first representative selected be appointed until May 2027
 - d. That the second representative selected be appointed until May

2025

(2) The Constitutional changes be recommended to Council for approval.

STA/ **Complaints Update**

10/2

3-24

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

Members heard that seven new complaints had been opened and four complaints had been closed. There was a total of ten ongoing complaints.

Committee heard that three complaints had been closed because the subject Member of the complaints was no longer a Member of the relevant Council and it would not have been in the public interest to continue to pursue these.

One complaint was found to have breached the Code of Conduct and this was handled by the police.

Members discussed the report and considered that it would be worthwhile analysing trends and themes within the complaints received over time. Members also discussed the possibility of using the District Parish Liaison meetings as a method for training Parish Clerks to handle complaints at a certain level.

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee noted the complaints update.

STA/ **Review of the Complaints Procedure**

11/2

3-24

Members received a draft workflow chart to highlight work that was being undertaken in a review of the complaints procedure.

Members discussed the complaints procedure and considered that feedback from the Parish Councils would be useful. Committee also considered that it should be reported back on whether any resolution to a complaint had been successfully completed.

RESOLVED – That Standards Committee noted the update.

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

12/2

3-24

There was no urgent business.