

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 26 JANUARY 2022**

#### **Present:**

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

Councillor Nigel Barker

Councillor Pat Kerry

Councillor Kathy Rouse

Pat Coleman - Parish Council Representative

Councillor David Hancock

Councillor Heather Liggett

Councillor Richard Welton

#### **Also Present:**

S Sternberg

N Calver

A Bond

Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

Governance Manager

Governance Officer

#### **STA/ Apologies for Absence**

**23/2**

**1-22** Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors W Armitage and D Ruff.

#### **STA/ Declarations of Interest**

**24/2**

**1-22** Members are requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, 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**

**25/2**

**1-22** RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on the 10 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **STA/ Review of the Constitution - Part 3**

**26/2**

**1-22** The Governance Manager presented a report that considered 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.

The areas included for review were the petitions scheme, planning and licensing decisions, Monitoring Officer Delegations and clarification on how the delegation scheme was applied in relation to Part 4 of the ACPA 2012.

Members discussed the areas for review and agreed that the planning and licensing decisions should be deferred until after a time when the views of the Chair of the Planning Committee could be considered.

RESOLVED – That the Committee gave consideration to proposals for review and supported the submission of the proposals to Council as part of the Constitution Review at a future meeting with the exception of the Planning and Licensing Decisions which would be deferred until the views of the Chair of Planning Could be considered.

**STA/** **Whistleblowing Policy Review**

**27/2**

**1-22**

The Governance Manager provided an annual update to Members on use of the Whistleblowing Policy.

Members heard that North East Derbyshire and Bolsover District Councils previously had in place a joint whistleblowing policy. This had now been adapted to present Members with a North East Derbyshire only policy.

It was noted that the last review of the Whistleblowing Policy took place in February 2021.

The Whistleblowing Policy had been reviewed to ensure that it remained fit for purpose and it was concluded that the existing version was satisfactory and up to date with current legislation and best practice.

The Officer reported that there were no instances of whistleblowing.

RESOLVED – That Standards Committee:

- (1) Agreed the current Whistleblowing Policy was fit for purpose; and
- (2) Noted that no instances of Whistleblowing have been made since the 2021 Annual Review of the Whistleblowing Policy.

**STA/** **RIPA Annual Review - TO FOLLOW**

**28/2**

**1-22**

The Governance Manager updated the Committee on the use of the RIPA powers within the last year.

Members heard that local authorities were sparing users of RIPA legislation and North East Derbyshire District Council had not used the powers since the last update to Committee in March 2019. The last time that RIPA powers were utilised was in 2012.

Committee were informed that training was slightly behind schedule as a result of the Covid Pandemic but steps were being taken to address this.

RESOLVED – That Standards Committee:-

- (1) Noted the update provided on the use of the policy.
- (2) Approved the revised RIPA Policy and Procedure document.
- (3) Agreed the use of one corporate account for social media sites.

**STA/ 29/2** **Draft Parish Council - Code of Conduct for Councillors**

1-22 The Monitoring Officer presented the draft code of conduct for Parish Councillors to committee to give Members the opportunity to comment on the Code of Conduct and to provide ideas on how to publicise this to the Parishes.

Members discussed the Code of Conduct for Parishes and agreed that some examples of pre-determination and bias would be useful to have included within the Code. Members also agreed that the Code should include signposting for relevant training needs.

Committee considered that it would be important to make Parishes aware that the Code could be tailored to suit the needs of individual Parish Councils.

**STA/ 30/2** **Update on Parish Representative**

1-22 The Governance Manager informed Members that the procedure for recruiting a new Parish Representative to the Standards Committee had begun. Four nominations had been received and these were now being voted on by the Parish Councils.

Committee were made aware that the new Parish Representative should have been selected by the time of the next meeting.

**STA/ 31/2** **Gifts & Hospitality Annual Report**

1-22 The Governance Manager advised the Committee on the details of all entries in the Council's Gifts and Hospitality Register in respect of offers of gifts and hospitality made to members and officers of the District Council during the period January 2021 to December 2021.

Councillors and Officers were reminded of their obligation to register gifts and hospitality.

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee noted the contents of this Annual Report for the period January 2021 to December 201 in respect of offers of gifts and hospitality made to Members and Officers.

**STA/ 32/2** **Complaints Update**

1-22 Committee received a verbal update from the Monitoring Officer on Member Complaints.

It was reported that there were four complaints. Three of these were ongoing and one was almost completed.

**STA/ 33/2** **Work Programme**

1-22 RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be noted.

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

**34/2**

**1-22** There was no urgent business discussed at the meeting.