

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 7 MARCH 2023

Present:

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

Councillor John Funnell
Councillor David Hancock
Councillor Heather Liggett
Councillor Richard Welton

Councillor Kevin Gillott
Councillor Pat Kerry
Councillor Kathy Rouse
Trevor John Collins - Parish Council
Representative

Also Present:

S Sternberg	Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
L Ingram	Legal Team Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer
M E Derbyshire	Members ICT & Training Officer
A Maher	Interim Governance Manager
A Bond	Governance Officer

STA/ Apologies for Absence

34/2

2-23 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pat Coleman.

STA/ Declarations of Interest

35/2

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

STA/ Minutes of Last Meeting

36/2

2-23 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 6 December 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

STA/ Review of the Constitution Stage Two - Feedback

37/2

2-23 Members heard that stage two of the review, to consider how Councillor Roles and Responsibilities, the Code of Conduct and acceptable behaviour should be reflected in the Council's Constitution had now been completed. A special informal session was held in which Members discussed a range of ethical issues as well as the Council's petition scheme, social media guidance and the planning protocol.

Members at the informal session had also held discussions on the Register of Interest (ROI) forms and had been informed that the forms could be updated virtually by making use of a feature on the Modern.Gov system.

The Members ICT and Training Officer demonstrated how ROI forms could be completed using the Modern.Gov system to Committee.

Committee considered that this approach should be taken forward but with the option for Members to complete a hard copy ROI form.

RESOLVED – That Committee noted the report.

STA/ **Review of the Constitution Stage Three - Preparation**

38/2

2-23

Committee were informed of the preparation for the third stage of the constitution review. This stage would consider the formal operation of the Council's Member and Officer Decision making arrangements, as well as the expectations which underpin them and how these should be reflected in the Council's Constitution.

An informal session would be organised in order to discuss this and would cover areas on Officers of the Council, Decision Making, Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters, the Council Procedure Rules, Access to Information Rules and Budget and Policy Framework Rules.

Members discussed the potential for political disagreements to arise during these discussions and heard that multiple options could be considered which would then be debated at a meeting of Full Council.

Committee considered that a formal mechanism for changing the Constitution should be introduced rather than this being done on an ad hoc basis through meetings of Full Council.

RESOLVED – That Committee confirmed the arrangements for the next informal session to review the Council's Constitution.

STA/ **Member Induction 2023 - PRESENTATION**

39/2

2-23

Members were updated on the plans for the Member Induction sessions for May 2023. They received an overview of the sessions and heard that all of the sessions would be recorded and made available to Members.

Committee was informed that a role of the Standards Committee was to monitor the attendance of Members at training events and as such this information would be reported to Committee once the induction period had been completed.

Members discussed the importance and benefit of having official photographs taken on the same day to ensure uniformity on the Council's website.

Committee considered that it would be beneficial for the dates of the member induction events to be circulated with nomination packs so that candidates would be aware of what would be expected of them.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

STA/ **Case Review**

40/2

2-23

Committee received a report which outlined the details of two new ethics

reports detailing incidents that had taken place at Teignbridge District Council and Cheshire East Council.

Members discussed the cases and considered that the processes at NEDDC were robust enough so that the incident at Teignbridge District Council was unlikely to happen here.

Members also discussed the Cheshire East Council incident and understood that this was the result of an Executive Leader Model being taken to the extreme.

RESOLVED – Committee considered the cases and whether any action should be taken.

STA/ Complaints Update

41/2

2-23

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

Members heard that one new complaint had been received and two existing complaints had been closed. There were a total of seven ongoing complaints.

Committee was informed that the Council's complaints procedure would be reviewed in the near future to ensure that it is in line with LGA procedures.

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee noted the complaints update.

STA/ Work Plan

42/2

2-23

Members noted that training attendance figures would be brought to Committee following the Member Induction sessions.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.

STA/ Urgent Business

43/2

2-23

There was no urgent business.