

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

13 October 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors English (Chair), Kelly (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Mrs English, Gregory and Wallsgrove

Also present was Independent Person Mr J Cooke

355. WELCOME

After welcoming Members and Officers to the meeting, the Chair welcomed Councillor Wallsgrove to the Committee and extended thanks to Councillor Bicknell for his service on the Committee.

356. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Independent Persons Mrs Sandra Prail and Mr John Thompson, and Councillors Coster and Caffyn.

357. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor P. English declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Items 8 and 10 as he was named on a complaint.

Councillor Wallsgrove declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 10 for a matter which had now been withdrawn.

358. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2022 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed at the end of the meeting.

359. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA WHICH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent matters for this meeting.

360. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed one question had been submitted, which is briefly summarised below:

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1. From Mr Chester to the Chair of the Standards Committee, Councillor P. English regarding Member and Officer relations.

(A schedule of the full question asked, and the response provided can be found on the [Standards Committee Public Question web page](#))

The Chair then drew Public Question Time to a close.

361. MONITORING OFFICER REPORT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report, which gave an overview of the work of the Monitoring Officer that fell within the scope of the functions for which the Committee was responsible. The Review of the Member/Officer Protocol would be coming to Committee in December, with a focus on ensuring this was up-to-date and fit for purpose. In the run-up to the elections, he would be reviewing the Social Media Guidance for Councillors and the Local Assessment Procedure and presenting these to the Committee. The Member Induction Programme would also be presented to the Committee in December. The Monitoring Officer also updated the Committee that since the report had been produced, Councillor Wallsgrove had completed her training to sit on the Standards Committee, the Audit & Governance Committee and the Planning Committee, for which she was a named substitute.

Members then took part in a question and answer session where the following points were raised:

- Could Members that had completed training for any committee, but who do not sit on that committee and are not a named substitute, be added to the training matrix so they could substitute if required? The Monitoring Officer confirmed he was happy with this.
- When bringing forward to the Standards Committee a new version of the Constitution or any other document, could the web address be displayed so that this can be easily located? The Monitoring Officer confirmed he was happy to do this.

The Committee noted the report.

362. WORK PROGRAMME

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer introduced the Work Programme.

It was asked whether the Induction Programme from four years ago could be appended to the Member Learning and Development report due to be presented to the Committee in December. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that details of the 2019 Induction Programme would be included in his report.

The Work Programme was noted by the Committee.

363. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

[Councillor P. English re-declared his Personal Interest in Agenda Items 8 and 10]

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report. He drew Members' attention to the table at Paragraph 4.3 which identified the number of complaints received; who the complaints were against; who they were made by; and whether they had been resolved by informal resolution. He explained that it had been a relatively busy period, although most cases had now been resolved.

There were no questions from Members.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

364. EXEMPT INFORMATION

One Member felt it was unnecessary to move into exempt business, and the item should be discussed openly. Following a discussion around this, Councillor J. English proposed to move into exempt business, which was seconded by Councillor Gregory.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the items.

365. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

Following a discussion, Members requested that they be provided with more detailed information on each individual complaint at future Committee meetings. The Monitoring Officer confirmed he was happy to do this.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Subject to approval at the next Standards Committee meeting

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(The meeting concluded at 6.46 pm)