

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

30 March 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Tilbrook (Chair), English (Vice-Chair), Caffyn, Edwards (Substitute for Bicknell), Mrs English, Gregory, Mrs Haywood and Kelly.

Also present were Independent Persons:

Mrs Sandra Prail
Mr John Thompson
Mr John Cooke

791. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bicknell and Daniells

792. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

793. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2021 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed at the end of the meeting.

794. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed that no questions had been submitted for this meeting.

795. MONITORING OFFICER REPORT

Upon invitation of the Chair, the Interim Group Head of Law and Governance introduced the report. He updated Committee on matters that had arisen since the report had been prepared. This included issues regarding Declarations of Interest from Members that were Members of more than one Council, which needed to be included in their declarations. He also explained that the Monitoring Officer (MO) would normally be supported by two deputies, however Arun currently had one as there was one vacancy, and the remaining Deputy Monitoring Officer would be leaving soon, so a recruitment process would need to begin. He went onto explain various areas in the MO report. He asked Members to consider what they felt should be included in the induction package for new Members, which he wanted to be on the Work Programme for the following Standards meeting.

Member then took part in a discussion where the following points were raised:

- It was felt that Code of Conduct training for new Members should be mandatory, and this should be enforced.

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- It was suggested that two deputies be recruited at the same time.
- Clarification was sought regarding whether the recording of the training provided by external trainers was able to be shared with all Arun District Councillors. The MO confirmed that this was the case, but it could not be shared with Parish Councillors due to copyright issues, however for future external training sessions agreement to share with Parish Councillors would be required from the Trainer.
- More Members should receive training on regulatory committees so that a pool of substitutes would be available.

A discussion then took place around the Monitoring Officer's decision not to add the narrative from Bognor Regis Town Council's Code of Conduct into the Arun Code of Conduct. The Committee wanted to explore the reasons for this further including why the MO felt the narrative was defective. They also wanted to be consulted on the proposed briefing paper and how this would look. Members wanted this to be included as a separate agenda item at the next meeting of the Standards Committee. The MO explained that an explanation of the Code should not form part of the Code but should be a standalone document capable of quick revision. It was the role of the MO to provide advice to Members on the Code, not the role of Members to provide advice to themselves.

Councillor Edwards then proposed the recommendation with the addition of 'including Monitoring the Operation of the Code'. This was seconded by Councillor Haywood.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Monitoring Officer Report be noted and the proposed items for the future workplan, including Monitoring the Operation of the Code, be supported.

796. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme, with the addition of Monitoring the Operation of the Code, as agreed in the previous Item.

797. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENTS OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

Upon invitation of the Chair, the Interim Group Head of Law and Governance introduced the report.

There were no questions from Members.

The recommendation was Proposed by Councillor Gregory and Seconded by Councillor Caffyn.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Register of Complaints against Councillors and progress of any outstanding complaints be noted.

798. EXEMPT INFORMATION

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.

799. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENTS OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

The recommendation was Proposed by Councillor Gregory and Seconded by Councillor Caffyn.

Following a discussion, the Committee

RESOLVED

That the Register of Complaints against Councillors be noted.

(The meeting concluded at 6.58 pm)