

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

11 July 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Huntley (Chair), May (Vice-Chair), Ayling, Batley, Goodheart, Kelly, Lloyd, Purser and Woodman

[Councillor Ayling was absent from the meeting during the consideration of the matters referred to in the following minutes 118 – 121]

118. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Turner and Miss Worne and also from Independent Person Mr John Cooke.

119. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

120. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2024 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

121. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA WHICH THE CHAIR 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.

122. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

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123. START TIMES

Following discussion and debate, the Committee

RESOLVED

That its start time for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2024/25 be 6.30 pm.

124. MONITORING OFFICER REPORT - JULY 2024

The Monitoring Officer introduced his update report to the Committee providing an overview of his work undertaken that fell within the scope of the functions for which the Committee was responsible.

He highlighted that Full Council at its meeting held on 13 March 2024, had approved constitutional amendments following a meeting of the Constitution Working Party held in February 2024. The amendments related to Part 5 (Section 1 – Council Procedure Rules and Section 2 – Committee Procedure Rules) relating to Public Question Time and Part 7 (Management Structure). The constitution had been subsequently amended on 10 April 2024.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that he was due to contact those Town and Parish Councils that had not yet adopted the Local Government Association (LGA) model code of conduct with the aim of bringing a universal approach to the model across the district. The Committee was also advised that a review of the Arun Code would be undertaken later in the year.

The Committee noted the report.

125. MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Monitoring Officer in introducing his regular report on Member Learning and Development provided a verbal update to the Committee. He informed Members that following the Annual Meeting of the Council and changes in Committee Memberships, Councillor Needs had become a Member of the Licensing Committee and so arrangements were in place to ensure that she received her mandatory training as soon as possible. Plans were in place to provide this in house by a member of the legal services team.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee were due to attend Planning Training tailored for Chairs of Planning and Development Control Committees on 20 and 21 July provided by the LGA.

The Committee noted the report and the verbal updates provided.

126. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENTS OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report, drawing Members attention to the table in paragraph 4.2 where it was highlighted that a simplified numbering system had been introduced in terms of case references.

The Monitoring Officer explained that in looking at trends and patterns, there had been a slight increase in the number of complaints submitted since the last meeting of the Committee in March 2024 and especially in respect of parish councils. The Monitoring Officer stated that he would be liaising with the Clerks of those Councils to obtain additional background information and to ascertain if there was a pattern forming so that the appropriate support and advice could then be provided.

In the absence of questions from Members regarding the register of complaints, the Committee noted the report.

127. RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

The Monitoring Officer introduced his report and reminded Members that the Standards Committee's functions included considering membership and recruitment of Independent Persons and making recommendations for appointments to Full Council. Independent Persons (IPs) were appointed for a fixed period of time, and all three of the Council's IPs' (Sandra Prail, John Thompson and John Cooke) terms of appointment were due to expire in July 2024. A recruitment process had been agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 18 January 2024 with the aim of appointing new Independent Persons at the July 2024 Full Council meeting. The Monitoring Officer had not been able to progress the recruitment process as promptly as envisaged and an extension of each IP's term of office to 6 November 2024 was therefore recommended.

Having had the recommendation proposed by Councillor Woodman and seconded by Councillor Ayling, the Chair then invited questions from Members.

Having noted the position regarding the Independent Persons recruitment process;

The Committee

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL

That the terms of office of the Council's current Independent Persons be extended to 6 November 2024.

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128. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and noted its Work Programme for 2024/25.

(The meeting concluded at 6.25 pm)