

Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE - INQUORATE MEETING

Wednesday 6th September 2017

Present: Councillor Andrew Marchington (Chair)
Councillor Mohan Sokhal

Apologies: Councillor Eric Firth
Councillor Shabir Pandor

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Firth and Pandor.

2 Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED –

That the consideration of the the Minutes of the Meetings held on 17 January and 24 May 2017 be deferred (meeting inquorate).

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

It was noted that all agenda items would be considered in public session.

5 Deputation/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Update on Standards Related Matters

The Committee received a report which set out the impact of the amendments to the standards process as agreed by Council on 26 April 2017, particularly in regards to (i) increasing the Committee's involvement in considering training and support for Members (ii) the role of the Committee in setting expectations in relation to behaviours (iii) reviewing the effectiveness of the standards process (iv) the role of the Chair in the decision making process (v) receiving an update on any complaints received and (vi) plans for future work.

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The report also reflected upon the recommendation of the Council meeting in April 2017 regarding reasonable behaviour and advised that a report was scheduled for consideration by Council which set out expectations for reasonable behaviour.

Discussion took place with regards to the content of and the matters addressed within the report. Arising from the discussions it was agreed that that further work need to be undertaken in relation to conduct and behavioural issues, and improvements in the provision of training. It was determined that there was a need to focus upon (i) the Councillor's role and behaviour in the scenarios of Councillor and Councillor contact, Councillor and Officer contact and acting as a ward representative (eg, attending meetings and responding to emails/correspondence) and (ii) appropriate interaction of Members when addressing the public, both in formal meetings and constituency business. In regards to training it was considered that the provision of generic training skills for all Committee/Panel etc Chairs should be reviewed, including additional support for Chair's presentational skills. It was agreed that all Members of Standards Committee be asked to provide any additional feedback in relation to Paragraph 2.5 of the report (training needs and other support) and that all matters raised be discussed further by Group Business Managers in early November.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted and that further consideration be given to the matters identified regarding Member conduct and training.

7 Update on Appointment of Independent Person

The Committee received a report which set out an update on the appointment of new Independent Persons following the change to the Standards process in Kirklees. The report advised that the Council has an Independent Person and a deputy whom were reappointed on 9 November 2016 for a period of up to a year pending the review of the standards regime. At the meeting of Council in April 2017 authority was delegated to the Monitoring Officer to agree a process for the appointment of two new independent persons, and arising from the recruitment process, one application was received from Mr Michael Stow. In consultation with the Chair of Standards Committee, it was agreed that it was not necessary to seek the appointment of a further Independent Person, and that it be recommended that Mr Stow be appointed for two years.

The report advised that Mr Stow had acted as an Independent Person for the Council since 2012 and had previously worked at Bradford Council.

It was noted that the report would be submitted to the meeting of Council on 13 September 2017 seeking the appointment of Mr Stow.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted and submitted to the meeting of Council on 13 September 2017 for determination.