

Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Wednesday 5th September 2018

Present: Councillor Eric Firth (Chair)
Councillor Bill Armer
Councillor James Homewood
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Mohan Sokhal
Mr M Stow (Independent Person)

Apologies: Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor Shabir Pandor

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Bolt and Pandor.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 7 March and 23 May 2018 be approved as correct records.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

All agenda items were considered in public session.

5 Deputation/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were considered.

6 Public Question Time

No questions were asked.

7 Review of Complaints

The Committee received a report which provided an update on complaints received since the previous meeting of the Committee held on 7 March 2018.

The Committee noted that during this period 12 complaints had been received relating to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct, 9 relating to Kirklees Councillors and 3 relating to Parish Councillors. It was noted that the complaints would not be investigated until formal complaint forms has been submitted and that the forms had been received in relation to 8 of the complaints.

The report provided a breakdown of progress of the 8 complaints, advising that the Committee's Assessment Panel would be considering 6 of the complaints later in the month.

Standards Committee - 5 September 2018

The Committee noted the update report and agreed that, in terms of the process for the complaint form, consideration should be given to imposing a deadline for submission. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial for the Committee to receive examples of complaints which have been subject to assessment and have been both dismissed and upheld.

RESOLVED - That the report be received and noted

8 Update on Training

The Committee received a report which set out options for Elected Member training on the Code of Conduct and standards process. The report advised that online training had been produced and was currently being tested and, once approved, would be an online training resource available to both staff and Elected Members.

The Committee were asked to consider any areas where they felt that Members may benefit from additional training and discussion took place regarding the need for supporting the development of advanced chairing skills. It was noted that arrangements were already being put in place for a chairing skills session to be held during the autumn and it was agreed that Group Business Managers be asked to identify members who may benefit from attending. The Committee considered that the advanced skills were particularly important for members who may Chair quasi-judicial decision making meetings.

In terms of testing the online training, the Committee agreed that it may be beneficial to provide the option of undertaking the session as a group activity so that discussion could take place on the effectiveness of the training module during its trialling period.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the report be received and noted.

(2) That the proposal for an Advanced Chairing Skills Session be supported and that further discussion be scheduled to take place at the next meeting of Group Business Managers, to provide the opportunity for the identification of any specific training needs.

9 Update on Standards

The Committee received a report which provided an update on standards and ethical matters, including relevant statute and case law. The report provided, for information, updates on (i) the Ledbury Case (ii) the Committee on Standards in Public Life consultation key points, and the Council's response to the consultation (iii) the NALC survey on Parish and Town Council Code of Conduct and (iv) the Intimidation of Parliamentary Candidates consultation.

The Committee noted the report that the Monitoring Officer would continue to review all legal developments and news items of relevance to the Committee, and provide reports, as appropriate to future meetings.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and noted.