

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

6.00 P.M.

22ND JANUARY 2015

PRESENT: Councillors Roger Mace (Chairman), Roger Sherlock (Vice-Chairman), Caroline Jackson, David Whitaker and Peter Williamson (substitute for Jane Parkinson)

Apologies for Absence

Councillors Chris Coates and Jane Parkinson

Officers in attendance

Debbie Chambers

Deputy Monitoring Officer

Peter Baines

Senior Democratic Support Officer

6 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

7 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9 REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer regarding the Chairman and Vice-Chairman's role in arrangements for dealing with complaints.

It was noted that part of the process for handling complaints since 2012 required the Monitoring Officer to consult with the Chairman prior to taking certain decisions. Where the Chairman had a conflict of interest, for example if the Chairman belonged to the same political group as the person complained of, it was customary to consult the Vice-Chairman instead. This had worked well so far as, fortuitously, the Committee had appointed a Vice-Chairman from a different group from the Chairman each year since 2012.

In order to maintain this good practice and avoid any further conflict of interest with the Vice-Chairman, it was agreed that the Committee should recommend to Council that the Constitution be changed, and that, from the next municipal year, the Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee be from a different political group than the Chairman. The recommendations, as set out in the report, were proposed and accepted.

Resolved:

- (1) That with effect from the 2015/16 municipal year, it be a requirement that the Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee be from a different group from the Chairman and that Council be requested to amend the Constitution accordingly.

- (2) That with effect from the 2015/16 municipal year, where a complaint was received about the conduct of a City Councillor who was of the same group as the Chairman of the Committee, the Monitoring Officer consult with the Vice-Chairman rather than the Chairman at all relevant stages of the complaints procedure, and that the Committee's arrangements be amended accordingly.

10 PROTOCOL ON LICENSING PROCEDURE

The Committee considered a draft protocol on licensing procedure for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

It was noted that the draft protocol detailed procedures relating to both the Licensing Act Committee and the Licensing Regulatory Committee, and that its addition to the Constitution may prove particularly helpful for new members of those Committees, appointed following the elections in May 2015.

Resolved:

That the draft protocol be recommended to Council Business Committee for inclusion in the Constitution.

11 RAISING CONCERNS (FORMERLY WHISTLEBLOWING) POLICY

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer detailing minor revisions to the Raising Concerns (formerly 'Whistleblowing') Policy, which had been referred to the Committee for consideration and approval.

It was noted that the amendments had been made in light of changes to the Employment Rights Act 1996, and that the opportunity had been taken to update a number of job titles in the policy at the same time.

Resolution:

That the revised Raising Concerns Policy be approved, and that it be noted that no disclosures had been made under the policy since the last report in October 2012.

12 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

13 SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS

The Chairman introduced a report containing a summary of code of conduct complaints, which had been received or concluded since the previous meeting.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.10 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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