



Minutes of the Standards Committee

19 November 2014

-: Present :-

Councillors Addis, Amil, Doggett, Hernandez, Parrott and Stocks

1. Election of Chairman/woman

Councillor Stocks was elected as Chairwoman for the meeting.

2. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Thomas (J).

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 20 November 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

4. Discussion Topic - Members Induction 2015

Members were advised that as part of the planning process for the Local Election in May 2015 officers were starting to develop a training programme. Members of the Standards Committee were asked for their views on previous Code of Conduct training events, whether the sessions were informative, engaging and sufficiently covered the topic in order for Members to be comfortable that they were complying with the Code of Conduct.

Members advised that previous training sessions where an overview had been provided, with Members then breaking into small groups to work through case studies had been well received. The case studies provided real life examples of the application of the Code of Conduct that Members were then able to apply to their circumstances.

The Committee were of the view that the training should be compulsory with Members not being able to preside at any Committee until they had undergone training on the Code of Conduct and that this should apply to newly elected Councillors and those that have been elected previously.

Members requested that during the Code of Conduct training officers should highlight that Councillors can be targeted through the complaint process and that being the subject of the complaint process can cause emotional anguish. Members requested that through the training process sections of the Constitution such as Council Standing Orders be highlighted. Members also felt that social

media and implications regarding the Code of Conduct should be incorporated into the training.

5. High Court refuses Councillor permission to judicially review decision of Standards Committee

Members noted the report and requested the paper be included as a case study for the Code of Conduct training in 2015.

6. Independent Member Feedback

The Monitoring Officer provided Members with observations of a Council meeting that the Council's Independent Person had attended. The Independent Person found overall the meeting was well chaired with balanced participation.

He noted the use of phones for social media, whilst noting the practice provided a live update for those unable to attend, Members needed to ensure they were still engaged in the debate.

The Independent Member also found the decision making process at Council confusing particularly when debating Mayoral decisions. Members were advised that as a result of this feedback, the Chairwoman stated, prior to debate the decision process.

7. Current Standards Matters

The Committee was updated on action that the Monitoring Officer had undertaken regarding current Standards matters.

Chairman/woman