

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

23rd June 2021

Present: Councillor Andrew Roberts in the Chair

Councillors A. Amos, Lamb (Vice-Chair),
Lawrance, Mitchell and Stephen

Also in Attendance:

Mr Roger Knight, St. Peter's Parish
Councillor

Mrs Dawn Merriman, Warndon Parish
Councillor

Mr Alan Tidy, St. Peter's Parish Councillor

Mr Ray Needham JP, Co-opted Member

Officers: Sian Stroud, Monitoring Officer

Apologies: Mr Dave Carney, Warndon Parish Councillor
and Councillor Mackay

1 Appointment of Substitutes

None.

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Public Participation

Chris Thorp addressed the Committee and made a number of proposals for amendment to the Council's complaints policy and procedures. In summary he proposed:

- That the Investigating Officer contacts and speaks to the complainant prior to commencing any investigation to clarify and confirm all aspects of the complaint.
- That a draft of the Investigation Officer's findings should be provided to the complainant for response and/or comment so that the complainant the opportunity to rebut any counters to the matters complained about.
- That successful complainants are kept regularly informed regarding actions that the Council intends to take to put things right post-investigation, and the Council makes it clear to all parties what actions it proposes to take in order to implement lessons learned.
- That the complaints policy be extended to ensure that members of all volunteer groups, forums or committees working to support the Council are provided with the same support and benefits through the complaints policy and procedures.

Mr. Thorp stated that he was happy to discuss these points in further detail with Committee Members. The Chairman thanked Mr. Thorp for his representations, which had been noted by the Monitoring Officer.

4 **Minutes**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **Annual Report Of The Standards Committee 2020/21**

The Committee considered the draft Annual Report of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21. The Monitoring Officer highlighted some of the main points, including investigations into complaints submitted under the Members' Code of Conduct, Ombudsman Complaints received, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter, the procedure for reporting back on Outside Bodies which had been implemented in 2020, the adoption of a revised Code of Conduct for Members and the Local Government Association's revisions to the Model Code of Conduct, published in January 2021 (it is intended to issue a revised pan-Worcestershire Code in May 2022), the review of the Council's guidance on use of stationery and finally the Member training on Ethical Standards which was undertaken in February 2021 as well as for newly-elected Councillors.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approve the draft Annual Report for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

6 **Reports of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

The Committee were informed that no reports had been received from the Ombudsman since the last meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the report.

7 **Complaints Made Under the Members' Code of Conduct**

The Committee considered a report on complaints made under the Members' Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer presented the report and explained that, since the last meeting of the Committee, 1 complaint, received earlier in the year, was now under investigation.

In terms of new complaints in this period, 4 had been received, 3 of which related to the same subject matter. Each of these complaints was currently under assessment.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the report.

8 **Registers of Members' and Officers' Gifts and Hospitality and Register of Interests**

The Committee were given the opportunity to review the registers of Members' and Officers' gifts and hospitality and register of interests.

9 Any Other Business

None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 7.25p.m.

Chairman at the meeting on
17th November 2021

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