

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 18 December 2017

PRESENT: Councillor Patel (Chair); Councillor Oldham (Deputy Chair); Councillors Bottwood, Marriott and Smith; and Kim Holland and Roger Rumsey (Independent Member Co-Optees)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Kilbride, B Markham and C Russell.

At this point the Chair welcomed Roger Rumsey, Independent Member Co-Optee to his first meeting on the Committee.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2017 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. RECRUITMENT OF PARISH COUNCILLOR CO OPTees TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

The Standards Committee was apprised of the applications and recent interviews that had taken place for the vacancy of co-optees to the Committee – Parish Councillors.

The Chair advised that three interviews had been held for the role of Parish Councillor Co-Optee. The Standards Working Group had felt that two of the applicants (Applicants B and C) should be recommended to the roles of Parish Councillor Co Optee; it did not recommend the other applicant for the vacancies. It was suggested that Applicants B and C are offered the role of Parish Councillor Co-Optee to the Standards Committee. The roles would formally commence from 1 January 2018.

6. CODE OF CONDUCT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR INVESTIGATING ALLEGED BREACHES

The Solicitor explained the proposed changes to the administration for the Arrangements for investigating alleged breaches.

The Standards Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- There is a need for both the complainant and subject Member to receive updates regarding the progress of the complaint. The Scrutiny Officer explained the process to the Committee.
- The Committee felt that it should always be the aim to resolve the complaint within 28

days but explanations should be provided why the process is taking longer if this is the case.

Resolved: That:

- (1) The proposed streamlined arrangements for investigating alleged breaches of the Members Code of Conduct are approved.
- (2) The Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer makes the arrangements for updating and publishing the arrangements for investigating alleged breaches of the Members Code of Conduct.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT ARRANGEMENTS COMPLAINTS

The Committee received a report detailing statistics in relation to Code of Conduct Arrangements Complaints.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- In response to a query regarding the involvement of the Standards Committee in the complaints process; Members were advised that if local resolution is not appropriate or it isn't possible to achieve a resolution, The Monitoring Officer will report the Investigating Officer's report to a Hearing Panel which will conduct a local hearing to decide whether the Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.
- The Standards Committee can also ask questions regarding statistical reports on complaints to its meetings
- A Member commented that on a recent occasion a complaint had been made and the Committee had been copied into the complaint by the complainant; in such further instances it would be useful for the Committee to be updated on progress.
- There is a need for more regular updates on statistics

Resolved: That:

- (1) The statistical data in relation to the number of complaints received and dealt with is noted.
- (2) Statistical data in relation to the number of complaints received and dealt with is presented to the Committee at each meeting.

8. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 5:30 pm

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