

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 30 September 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Oldham (Deputy Chair, in the Chair); Councillors Bottwood, Kilbride, B Markham, Marriott and Russell, Councillor Lewis (Co-optee – Parish Councillor), Councillor Hook (Co-optee – Parish Councillor) and Ika Castka (Co-optee- Independent)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Patel (Chair).

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2019 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. CO OPTEE (INDEPENDENT MEMBER) - VACANCY

The Chair reminded the Standards Committee that Roger Rumsey had resigned from his position as Co-Optee (Independent). He asked that a card be sent to Mr Rumsey, from the Standards Committee thanking him for all his hard work and dedication to the Committee.

The Chair then asked for a nomination to the Working Group as the previous Working Group that would interview candidates to this vacant role had comprised Councillor Zoe Smith who was now no longer a member of this Committee. Councillor Cathrine Russell was proposed to be a member of the Working Group.

RESOLVED: That the vacant post of Co-Optee (Independent Member) is advertised.

That membership of the Working Group comprises Councillors Patel, Oldham, Bottwood, B Markham and Russell.

6. MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL - UPDATE

The Solicitor presented the report - Member/Officer Protocol – Update to the Committee and highlighted the salient points.

The Standards Committee asked questions, made comment and heard:

- Concern was raised regarding have a separate process in place in addition to the Code of Conduct. It was confirmed that the proposal was for a local Protocol.
- The Committee suggested that the Protocol might also be useful for the Unitary Council to present with for its consideration also.

It was proposed that the following Members are appointed to the Working Group:

Councillors Patel, Bottwood, B Markham, Russell (Marriott – substitute),
Councillor Lewis (Co-Optee – Parish Councillor) and Ika Caskra (Co Optee-
Independent)

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) The revised Protocol is noted.
- (2) A Working Group is appointed comprising Councillors Patel, Bottwood, B Markham, Russell (Marriott – substitute), Councillor Lewis (Co-optee – Parish Councillor) and Ika Castka (Co Optee- Independent)
- (3) A further report is presented to a future meeting with a view to adoption of a revised Protocol, incorporating such amendments as the Committee may consider appropriate having regard to the report of the Working Group.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS - COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Solicitor presented the report - Local Government Ethical Standards - Committee on Standards in Public Life and highlighted the salient points.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- The Committee welcomed the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL)
- There would be a need for comprehensive training on Code of Conduct when the Members are elected to the Shadow Unitary Authority in May 2020.
- The Committee felt that it would be beneficial that the Working Group suggested in the report should be the same Working Group that was established at agenda item 6.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The content of this report regarding the recommendations of the CSPL are noted;
- (2) The Working Group established at agenda item 6 will also consider the best practice recommendations of the CSPL and recommend to the Committee any improvements to the Council's ethical standards arrangements that it considers are required.

8. STATISTICS - CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

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

The Democratic and Member Services Manager apprised the Committee of each of the complaints listed.

One of the complaints referred to a Standard Hearing and the potential date was provided to the Members. Once confirmed the date would be communicated to the Committee.

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.

**9. 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 5:37 pm