

STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Monday, 28 April 2014

Present: Councillor WJ Davies (Chair)

Councillors M McLaughlin T Harney
D Roberts Jones
J Salter Cummings
L Fraser Jones
P Kearney

Apologies Councillors RL Abbey G Ellis

14 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

15 MINUTES

The Committee were requested to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of 24 February 2014.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the 24 February 2014 be approved.

16 SUMMARY OF THE WORK AND PROPOSALS OF THE STANDARDS WORKING GROUP

The Head of Legal and Member Services and Monitoring Officer submitted a report detailing the work undertaken by the Standards Working Group in relation to the Council's Ethical Framework relating to Member conduct, related issues and the analysis undertaken in relation to the Member Survey on Perceptions and Experiences on the Council's Governance Arrangements.

The report indicated that the Working Group had considered by the Committee:

- Member Survey on Perceptions and Experiences on the Council's Governance Arrangements;
- Members' Code of Conduct;

- Protocol on Dealing with Complaints Against Members;
- Disclosure and Barring Service checks for checks;
- Amendment to the Council's Constitution to give effect to The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

The Member Survey on Perceptions and Experiences on the Council's revised Governance Arrangements; outcome of the survey; revised Members' Code of Conduct; revised protocol: arrangements for investigating and making decisions in relation to allegations made under the Members' Code of Conduct; proposed amendment to the Council's DBS Policy and Standing Order 13 of the Council Procedure Rules were attached as appendices to the report.

Members thanked all the Standards Working Group for their excellent work and their contribution in relation the report.

In relation to the Members' Code of Conduct regarding paragraph 7.3, a Member asked the Head of Legal and Member Services if he felt that it was sufficient to only have to inform and not consult with the relevant Political Group Leader of a complaint made against a Member of his Group. In response, the Head of Legal and Member Services indicated that the only requirement within the Localism Act was for the Monitoring Officer to consult and seek the views of one of the four independent persons.

In response to a member, the Head of Legal and Member Services indicated that following the outcome of the survey the report detailed a series of recommendations going forward, one of which was to review the comments made by Members and seek Members' views by way of a survey on a regular basis.

It was commented that some of the issues raised by Members in the survey would form part of the Committee's work programme for the ensuing year.

A Member commented that in relation to the online survey, some of the questions posed could have been worded differently and suggested that the survey be undertaken on an annual basis.

In response, the Head of Legal and Member Services indicated that this would be brought back to Committee as part of the work programme.

Resolved – That:

- (1) **the Member Survey on Perceptions and Experiences on the Council's Revised Governance Arrangements and the Standards**

Working Group's comments be noted; and the recommendations as set out in Appendix 2 be approved;

- (2) the revised Members' Code of Conduct set out at Appendix 3 be approved and be recommended to Council for approval with an effective date of 1 August 2014;**
- (3) the revised Protocol on Dealing with Complaints Against Members set out Appendix 4 be approved and be recommended to Council for approval with an effective date of 1 August 2014;**
- (4) the proposed amendment to the Council's Disclosure and Barring Service Policy set out at Appendix 5 be approved and be recommended for approval to Council (as necessary) with an effective date of 1 October 2014;**
- (5) the proposed amendment set out at Appendix 6 to Standing Order 13 of the Council's Council Procedure Rules contained within the Council's Constitution to give effect to The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 be approved and recommends the same to Council for approval.**

17 COUNCILLOR TOM HARNEY

The Chair thanked Councillor Tom Harney who would not be standing at the forthcoming election.

He thanked him for all his invaluable work whilst being a Member of the Committee and his contribution to the Standards Working Group, The Committee wished Councillor Harney well for the future.

Resolved -

That the Committee's thanks to Councillor Tom Harney for his contribution be noted.