

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

15 DECEMBER 2021

PRESENT

Councillors J. Holden (in the Chair), S.J. Gilbert, D. Jerrome, P. Myers, and D. Western

Independent Member Mr. C.E.J. Griffiths,
Parish Council representative Mr A. Rudden
Independent Person Mr M. Whiting

In attendance

Dominique Sykes	Deputy Monitoring Officer
Victoria Talbot	Organisational Development and Learning Officer
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K. Procter, Councillor Dr S. Carr, Councillor J. Dillon, Councillor M. Mirza, Councillor A. New, Councillor J.D. Newgrosh, Mr. D. Goodman, Mr R. Brown, and N. Jackson

6. MINUTES

Mr Griffiths noted several typos within the minutes to be corrected.

RESOLVED: That, following the amendment of typos noted by Mr Griffiths, the minutes of the meeting held 22 September 2022 be agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF MEMBERS DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Organisational Development and Learning Officer went through the presentation that had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee were informed that the 62 within the presentation referred to the number of enrolments made rather than total number of Councillors. Out of the core training modules 56% of Councillors had completed the GDPR training 61% had completed the Adults Safeguarding training and only 6% had completed the Children's Safeguarding training. For training courses provided by the LGA there were only 8 instances of Trafford Councillors completing one of the 6 training courses offered. Out of the internally provided training courses the Councillor induction session were the best attended with 47 Councillors taking part and the other sessions had a limited level of uptake. The presentation concluded with a set of next steps which were focused on increasing the levels of participation among Councillors going forward.

Following the presentation, the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments. The discussions which followed indicated there was some confusion among Councillors with regards the training offered with some not being aware that training had to be completed on an annual basis. The Chair informed the Organisational Development and Learning Officer he had received

Standards Committee
15.12.21

reminders for the adult safeguarding training but not for Children's Safeguarding training. The Organisational Development and Learning Officer stated she would check to ensure the reminders were in place.

Councillor Gilbert asked how long the training sessions lasted. The Organisational Development and Learning Officer responded that the Adult Safeguarding Training lasted about an hour, the GDPR training was around 30 minutes, and she would provide details of the other timings to members after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted.
- 2) That details of the length of training session be provided to Members of the Committee.

8. MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report on the Code of Conduct. The Committee were informed that the report represented the conclusion of their involvement in updating the code before it went to Scrutiny, the Executive, and Full Council for approval. Members were reminded of the content of the report received at the previous meeting which had covered the content of the proposed code and the differences with the Council's code of conduct. Since that meeting a short consultation had been conducted. Following the consultation a few minor adjustments had been made to the local changes in preparation of the Code for adoption. The Committee were then asked to agree the code for recommendation to the Executive and Council.

Following the introduction Councillor Jerrome asked what other authorities within Greater Manchester were doing. The Deputy Monitoring Officer responded that nationally there was not a set of statistics available, but it was known that many authorities had adopted the code in full, many had made local changes, and many had not begun to consider the model code. Within Greater Manchester there were two Council's that had concerns about some of the content around declarations, two were moving towards adoption in full and the rest were either at the beginning of considering the code or hadn't officially begun to consider it.

Mr Griffiths noted several typos within the document and offered to contact the Governance Officer with the corrections. Mr Griffiths also suggested that in paragraph 9 the word upholding or maintaining should be used rather than preserving and the Committee agreed.

Councillor Myers requested that the training on the Code of Conduct be conducted via e-learning and the Committee agreed.

The Committee then approved the Code of Conduct and recommended it for adoption by the Executive.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That Committee approve the Code of Conduct and recommend it be adopted by the Executive.

*Standards Committee (15.12.21)***9. DISPENSATIONS**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report and informed the Committee of the general dispensations. Over the past 8 years the Council had agreed a list of general dispensations which avoid the need for Councillors make certain declarations at meetings. The number of dispensations had reduced over time due to some becoming obsolete those that were still relevant were presented within the report. The Deputy Monitoring Officer pointed out that if agreed the dispensations would be in place for four years which was the same approach as the Council had taken previously. Following the introduction, the Chair spoke in favour of agreeing the dispensations and for them to be in place for four years.

Councillor D. Western proposed the dispensations be agreed for four years, Councillor Myers seconded the proposal, and it was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the dispensations within the report be agreed for four years.

10. PUBLICATION OF MEMBERS ADDRESSES

The Chair introduced the item and expressed his opinion that he was fine with his details being available within the register. Councillor Gilbert expressed she was concerned about her address being so readily available and what that meant for both her safety and that of her family. Councillor Gilbert did not see why addresses were required to be published online and she had spoken with other Members about the topic and many felt the same way.

Mr Withing spoke about the laws referenced in the report and how it seemed that the legislation did not keep up with technological development. Mr Withing added that he felt Councillors should not have to prove that they were threatened to remove their addresses and that addresses should be removed to protect Members.

The Chair asked if it was possible for the Council to not publish any addresses. The Deputy Monitoring Officer responded that it was a grey area. There had been legislative changes so that addresses did not have to be published on ballots but there had been no changes around the register of interests. The Deputy Monitoring Officer indicated the three options laid out in the report of; do nothing, make the dispensation more widely advertised to Members, and having a blanket Exemption. Mr Griffiths added that he would like the Committee to take a strong steer on this and to put forward option three as the Committee's preferred course of action.

Following the discussion, the Chair requested that the next steps proceed quickly due to the concerns raised by the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and recommendations agreed.

11. MONITORING OFFICERS REPORT

The Deputy Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that there had been no developments to report since their last meeting.

Standards Committee
15.12.21

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and finished at 7.16 p.m.