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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2017

PRESENT

Councillor Dr. K. Barclay (in the Chair).

Councillors K. Procter (Vice-Chairman), R. Bowker, C. Boyes, P. Myers, Mr. D. Goodman, Mr. C. Griffiths, Mr R. Brown and Mr S. Neild.

In attendance

Jane Le Fevre

Monitoring Officer

Alexander Murray

Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss L. Blackburn, L. Dagnall, Mrs. L. Evans, M. Freeman, A. Western and A. Williams.

10. MINUTES

Mr Goodman noted that his middle initial had been recorded as G instead of J and asked that it be corrected.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the minutes of the meeting held 14 September 2016 be agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman once the above amendment has been made.

11. PLANNING PROTOCOL

The Monitoring Officer presented a report and the proposed planning protocol to the Committee. It was made clear to Committee Members that the Protocol was to apply to all Councillors involved in the Planning process not just those who sit on the Planning Committee. The Monitoring Officer had met with the Chairman of the Planning Committee prior to the meeting which had led to two additional areas being added to the Protocol. Those areas were site visit protocol and a requirement for members of the public to submit documents in advance of Planning Committee meetings in order that they can be verified.

The Committee were then given the opportunity to raise questions and propose amendments to the Planning Protocol. Members raised a number of questions and received detailed responses from the Monitoring officer. At the end of discussions the following amendments were to be made to the protocol; that a line be added to make it clear that the protocol applies to Councillors who act as substitutes, that a link to the protocol be put upon the planning webpage once it had been ratified by Council, that the reasons for information being classified be put within the document, that a part be added to the protocol relating to how members of the Planning Committee who lobbies on behalf of an application should act.

Members also requested that a section be added to make it clear to members of the public not to make emotional points relating to planning applications. The

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monitoring officer informed members that there already was information on the Council's Planning Committee webpage and that she would speak the head of planning to see if it could be improved.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the amendments listed above be made to the Planning Protocol before it goes before the Planning Committee.
- 2) That the Monitoring Officer is to consult with the head of planning regarding the improvement of information on the Council's Planning Committee webpage.

12. LOCAL STANDARDS UPDATE - ISSUES

The Monitoring officer gave a brief overview of the work that had been done over the year relating to standards. The Committee were informed that the Monitoring Officer had attended the entirety of the Council's decision making Committees apart from the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. The Monitoring Officer was satisfied with the way that the Committees were running. The Monitoring Officer noted that there had been a vast improvement in the timing of reports and the publishing of Committee and Executive decisions. One area that had been identified as an area for improvement was the publishing of officer decisions and the Monitoring officer was undertaking a piece of work to address the issue.

The Committee were told that Trafford Council had continued to have low levels of Complaints against members. There had only been four complaints made against members during the municipal year and all incidents had reached a conclusion. The Monitoring officer described each of the complaints and the actions taken by the Council to resolve them. One of the complainants had not been satisfied with the outcome of their complaint but the Monitoring officer had consulted with an independent person and they agreed that the Council had done all they could.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted by the Committee.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.33 pm