

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

22 SEPTEMBER 2022

PRESENT

Councillor K. Procter (in the Chair).

Councillors Mrs. P. Young (Vice-Chair), W. Frass, S.J. Gilbert, D. Jarman, D. Jerrome, S. Maitland and D. Western.

Co-opted Members: Mr. D. Goodman, Mr. C.E.J. Griffiths, A. Rudden and Mr M. Whiting.

In attendance

Head of Legal and Governance – S. Boyle
Senior Governance Officer – I. Cockill

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dr. S. Carr, M. Mirza and A. New.

1. ATTENDANCES

The Chair noted the attendances for the meeting and welcomed the newly appointed Members on the Committee.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That, subject to several typographical corrections, the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 March 2022, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. MEMBERS ADDRESSES

Further to Minute No. 10 of the meeting held on 15 December 2021, the Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report advising that a consultation exercise had been conducted with elected members on the matter. The report presented the outcomes from the consultation and sought the Committee's views on three proposals for how the Council might proceed.

Considering the publication of Members' private addresses on the declaration of interests from the Committee believed personal safety, not only of individual Members but also their family was of primary importance. The Committee considered that disclosure of the residential property could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.

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Members acknowledged that in technological terms the world had moved on and that there were various means for members of the public to communicate with elected members. Whilst the Committee recognised that some Members were comfortable publicising their home address, the consensus was in favour of a blanket ban.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the content of the report and the outcomes of the consultation exercise, be noted.
- (2) That the Council be recommended to adopt a blanket policy whereby all Members' addresses are treated as sensitive interests and not made publicly available.

4. DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICERS REPORT

The Head of Legal and Governance provided an oral update as follows:

(a) Local Government Association (LGA) Seminar

The LGA had confirmed that it would fund a seminar with Members on a topic of the Council's choosing from a list of 14 topics to be determined. On confirmation of the topic themes, the Head of Legal and Governance would canvass members and arrange a seminar based on the consensus.

(b) Monitoring Officer Investigations

In the current Municipal Year to date, two matters had been investigated and both had been dismissed at the early assessment stage.

RESOLVED: That the oral update be noted.

5. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

Note: The Chair allowed consideration of the following matter as an item of Urgent Business to inform the Monitoring Officer's preparations for the review of the Code of Conduct.

Case Work Originating from Outside a Member's Ward

Councillor Jerrome highlighted the constitutional provisions for when Members encounter issues originating outside of their own ward and queried the mechanisms and training for the purposes of reminding Members, including realignment of the provisions into one section in the Council's Constitution.

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In respect of the Members' Code of Conduct, the Head of Legal and Governance confirmed that a Member acting outside of their ward did not fall within the scope of which a complaint could be made and the expectation was that Members should adhere to the constitutional provisions. He also considered the possibility of a working group to look at as part of the next Code of Conduct Review.

RESOLVED: That the Monitoring Officer be requested to consider awareness training, particularly with the impending Boundaries Review which could possibly affect Members' associations locally, and report back to the Committee.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and finished at 7.32 p.m.

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