

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

27 JULY 2023

Present:

Councillors Bullivant (Vice-Chair), Henderson, MacGregor, Nutley, J Taylor and D Cox (Chair)

Members in Attendance:

Councillors Clarence, Daws, P Parker and Wrigley

Officers in Attendance:

Sarah Selway, Democratic Services Team Leader & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Phil Shears, Managing Director
Paul Woodhead, Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer to the Council

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR 2023/24

RESOLVED that Cllr D Cox be elected Chair of Standards Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year.

2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR 2023/24

RESOLVED that Cllr Bullivant be elected Deputy Chair of Standards Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN REPORT

Members discussed the issues raised in the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Report – attached to the Agenda of this meeting – and it was

acknowledged that at an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 14 February 2023 an apology had been given to Cllr Daws.

6. STANDARDS DRAFT COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Cllr MacGregor proposed that the Standards draft complaints process be deferred to enable further regarding the procedure to be added to the document. This was seconded by Cllr J Taylor put to the vote and lost.

Members agreed the following changes to the process:-

- Overview – all parties involved will be advised of any variations to the approved process
- Overview - the Council will regularly when appropriate keep the complainant informed of the progress of the complaint
- Step one – a response will be sent to the complainant within 5 working days
- Step Two – The Monitoring Officer will write to the complainant to confirm that the complaint is being taken forward
- Step Four – The Monitoring Officer will take into account Human Rights and other material aspects when considering the information supplied
- Step Five - In the event that the complaint or aspects of it are referred to the Police for investigation the Monitoring Officer may adjourn this process. In that instance the Complainant will be advised.
- Step seven – due diligence to be undertaken when appointing an Independent Investigator
- Appeals Process – Members could appeal against the wording in the decision letter/notice

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the Standards Process with changes as discussed be adopted.

7. TO AGREE A WORK PROGRAMME FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Members discussed and agreed that the following be added to the Committees work programme

- Due diligence when appointing External investigators to look into complaints against Councillors
- Members Code of Conduct in relation to bullying
- Training for Standards Committees Members on Equality and Diversity; unconscious bias training; human rights/free speech.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.25 pm.

Chair