

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2 OCTOBER 2020

Present:

Councillors Bullivant, Connett, Evans, Nuttall (Vice-Chair), Peart, L Petherick (Chair), Barnicott and Smith

Independent Members

Mr Barnicott and Ms Smith

Apologies:

Councillor Dowding

Officers in Attendance:

Paul Woodhead, Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Sarah Selway, Democratic Services Team Leader & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Natalia Anderson, Trainee Solicitor
Beth Tipton, Administrative Assistant

15. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 February, 15 July and 22 July 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed at the earliest convenience.

Cllr Bullivant abstained from voting on the minutes for 15 July 2020 and 22 July 2020.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

17. ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by the Leader and seconded by Cllr Nuttall that Cllr L Petherick be elected as the Chair of Standards Committee 2020/21.

RESOLVED that Cllr L Petherick be elected Chair of Standards Committee for 2020/21.

The vote was unanimous.

18. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

It was proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Leader that Cllr Nuttall be elected as the Deputy Chair of Standards Committee 2020/21.

RESOLVED that Cllr Nuttall be elected Deputy Chair of Standards Committee for 2020/21.

The vote was unanimous.

19. MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE BY FULL COUNCIL

Members discussed the recommendations, they supported the proposals with an amendment to recommendation (a) to add '*a minimum of any*', to ensure that Members were selected on availability and the sub-committees was of the appropriate size.

RECOMMENDED to full Council that the membership of the Standards Committee be limited to six elected members; and

RESOLVED by the Committee:

- (a) A sub-committee a minimum of any three members be appointed to deal with standards hearings;
- (b) Non-voting parish / town council members be selected to participate in hearings as outlined in the report; and
- (c) The arrangements for dealing with the Code, associated protocols and the investigation procedure be reviewed by the Committee and recommendations to full Council made following consideration of further guidance from the LGA.

The vote was unanimous.

20. PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Chair brought Members attention to the public consultation and advise Members should notify the Monitoring Officer should they wish to add items to the committees work programme for consideration.

RESOLVED that the public consultation on standards (published on 22 September 2020) be noted.

The vote was unanimous.

21. WORK PROGRAMME

Members discussed the hearing of 20 October 2020 and agreed that a sub-committee of three members should be selected to sit at this hearing.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

The vote was unanimous.

22. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs 1, 2 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The vote was unanimous.

23. CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION REPORTS

Members discussed the complaint by Cllr Alison Eden against Cllr David Matthews. While the Committee accepted the Investigators findings that there were no breaches of the code of conduct they agreed that the behaviour of Cllr Matthews did not show him in a good light and a letter should be sent to Cllr Matthews to ask him to reflect on his behaviour in this matter and to be mindful of his duties under the code of conduct.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the Standards Committee accept the finding that there were no breach of the code of conduct in respect of this complaint; and
- (2) write to Cllr David Matthew to inform him that there had been no breach of the code of conduct but that the behaviour did not meet those expected of an elected councillor and ask him to reflect on this his behaviour.

The vote was unanimous.

Cllr Bullivant left the meeting at this point.

Members discussed the complaint against Cllr Phil Bullivant by Mr Paul Sampson.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee accept the finding that there were no breach of the code of conduct in respect of this complaint.

The vote was unanimous.

Members discussed the complaint against Cllr Phil Bullivant by Cllr Liam Mullone (supported by Cllrs Daws and Bradford). Members discussed the need for complainants to substantiate their complaints with evidence.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) The Standards Committee accept the finding that there were no breach of the code of conduct in respect of this complaint; and
- (1) The Members complainants' procedure be reviewed by the Standards Committee to ensure that complaints are substantiated with evidence from complainants.

The vote was unanimous.

Members discussed the complaint against Cllr Liam Mullone by Cllr Phil Bullivant.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee accept the finding that there were no breach of the code of conduct in respect of the complaint

The vote was unanimous.

Members discussed the complaint against Cllr Bradford by Cllr Phil Bullivant.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee accept the finding that there were no breach of the code of conduct in respect of this complaint.

The vote was unanimous.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.25 am.

Chair