

Standards Committee Minutes

Date: 8 February 2017

Time: 6.15 - 6.37 pm

PRESENT: Councillor C Etholen (in the Chair)

Councillor Mrs J A Adey, Councillor M Clarke, Parish Councillor Mr A Cobden, Councillor R Raja and Councillor J A Savage, Councillor A D Collingwood and Councillor R J Scott

Parish Council Member: Parish Councillor Mr A Cobden

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Broadbent, Councillor A Green, Mr G Houalla and Mr Pearce.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18 MODERN SLAVERY TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

The Committee received a report which set out the reasons for publishing a voluntary Modern Slavery Transparency Statement. The Statement set out the steps the Council could take to seek to prevent slavery and human trafficking being involved in its supply chains and invited the support of the Standards Committee and Council.

It was reported that one other local authority, East Lindsey DC, had published a voluntary statement and in September 2016 the Corporate Governance Group agreed that, although it was not a statutory duty for the Council to provide a Statement, it was considered good practice. Also in view of the Home Office approach with regard to tackling modern slavery it was possible that future legislation could make the publication of such statements mandatory.

It was noted that a number of Council services had fed into the Statement including HR, Fraud Prevention, Procurement and the Prevent and partnership work done by the Communities and Environment teams.

At the meeting in November 2016, the Standards Committee confirmed its support for the principle of a Statement and expressed the view that following its own approval, full Council should also be invited to support it.

Members asked how new and existing contractors would be checked and monitored to make sure they were not involved in slavery or human trafficking. In response it was reported that best practice on procurement continues to develop and measures would be in place to check tenderers' compliance when bidding for contracts. Officers would continue to review existing contracts and monitoring would be in place. It was suggested that existing and new contractors be required to confirm that they abide by the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement. The District Solicitor confirmed that this would be investigated and reported back to the committee.

Recommended: That the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement be approved and that full Council be recommended to support its publication.

19 QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS UPDATE

A report was submitted which provided an overview of recent complaint cases regarding Member conduct since November 2016.

It was noted that since the last meeting two complaints had been concluded. One of these complaints, which sought to revive an earlier withdrawn complaint, was rejected prior to the preliminary Stage 1. Another complaint progressed to Stage 2, at which stage after consideration it was not taken forward for investigation. The complainant chose to remain anonymous and therefore the subject member's identity was also anonymised in the report to ensure the complainant could not be identified. There were no current outstanding complaints.

It was noted that the continuing small number of complaints suggested that ethical standards continue to be taken seriously by local Councillors.

Members requested that information be included on the associated appendix to the report with regards to the involvement of the Independent Person where relevant.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Jemma Durkan - Senior Democratic Services Officer
Julie Openshaw - District Solicitor