

Standards Committee Minutes

Date: 11 July 2017

Time: 6.15 - 6.35 pm

PRESENT: Councillor C Etholen (in the Chair)

Councillor K Ahmed, Councillor D J Carroll, Councillor M Clarke, Councillor R Newman and Councillor A D Collingwood

Independent Member: Mr G Houalla and Mr M Pearce

Parish Council Member: Parish Councillor Mr A Cobden

20 MINUTE'S SILENCE

A 1 minute silence was observed to pay respects to Parish Councillor Brian Swain, a Co-opted Parish Member, who had sadly passed away.

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Green and Councillor Savage.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24 REVIEW OF INDEPENDENT PERSON TRAINING

The Committee received a report which informed Members about training which had been attended by Mr Houalla, Independent Person.

Mr Houalla reported that the training had provided information on legislation, process and the role of the Independent Person. It included anonymised case studies and information from experienced Independent Persons. Mr Houalla noted that the training demonstrated that Wycombe District Council was following best practice guidance and that he had been surprised to note that many Councils had only the minimum of one Independent Person.

In response to a question it was noted that the Council could choose to appoint more than two Independent Persons. However, after a discussion it was accepted

that the current two Independent Persons provided enough resilience and expertise required in relation to the number of cases presented for review.

It was reported that Independent Persons and Councillors were invited to attend the same training.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

25 QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS UPDATE

A report was submitted which provided an overview of recent complaint cases regarding Member conduct since February 2017.

It was reported that since the last meeting four new complaints had been submitted with two concluded at Stage 1. Regarding the other two complaints, one was at Stage 2, and the other one had been completed since the report had been compiled. Progress would be reported at the next meeting.

In response to a question it was noted that if no response was received from a complainant then it was considered that they were not dissatisfied with the Member's response and the complaint would not progress further.

It was noted that the continuing small number of complaints suggest that ethical standards continue to be respected by local Councillors.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

26 SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no supplementary items.

27 URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

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