

Standards Committee Minutes

Date: 28 January 2020

Time: 6.15 - 6.40 pm

PRESENT: Councillor C Etholen (In the Chair)

Councillors: M Clarke, A Collingwood, A Green, H McCarthy and J Savage.

Parish Cllrs: A Cobden, T Nolan and Mrs H Stearn.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Miss S Brown.

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 19 February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Nolan and Councillor Green declared an interest in agenda item 4 as they had been the subject of a complaint lodged against them.

4 SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The final report of the Standards Committee was submitted for information which requested that Members note the report and refer it to Full Council at its next meeting scheduled to take place in March 2020.

Members were provided with an outline of the Committee`s work schedule over the past year, this was attached at (Appendix 1) to the report. In addition (Appendix 2) highlighted the list of complaints which had been submitted under the procedures determined by the Localism Act.

A Member stated that it was unfortunate the process required that all complaints be reported for information, even if they were not genuine and of a malicious nature. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Council was indeed bound by the current procedures but that the level of information provided at this stage of the complaint could change under the new Authority should it deem appropriate following the scheduled review of the whole of the standards process at the end of February.

Members emphasised that it was imperative that a high level of public transparency be upheld and maintained and incorporated within an easily enforceable process. Members unanimously agreed that a formal proposal should be put forward to the

new Authority for a specific Standards Committee to be set up to deal with Standards matters.

The Monitoring Officer reassured Members that the Legal and Governance work stream had issued a legal briefing note setting out the relevant transitional regulations in respect of standards. It was explained that the new Members` Code of Conduct which would be included within Buckinghamshire Council`s Constitution was to be considered by the Shadow Authority on the 27th February 2020.

The Chairman reiterated his appreciation to all that had served on the Standards Committee over the years and for the valuable contribution they had made.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) the report be noted
- (ii) All Members be thanked for their invaluable contribution to the work of the Standards Committee

5 REVIEW OF MODERN SLAVERY TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

A report was submitted which requested approval for the preparation and publication of a voluntary statement on modern slavery which would express and demonstrate the Council`s commitment to its role in the prevention of modern slavery.

The report stated that whilst the Council was not under a duty to publish such a statement it was regarded as good practice to do so. The Council`s first such statement had been approved by this Committee in 2017, and had been brought back for further minor amendments in 2018.

Members were asked to agree the statement attached at (Appendix 1) of the report, and refer it to Full Council for its endorsement.

Members were informed that this statement would only be effective for the remainder of the life of the Council, but that the new Authority would also be signing up to such a statement which would be very similar in nature.

RESOLVED: That the revised Modern Slavery Transparency Statement be accepted and noted and referred to Full Council for its endorsement.

6 THANKS

The Chairman of the Committee took the opportunity to once again express his heartfelt thanks to all Members, Parish Councillors, Independent Members and officers for all the work undertaken during their time serving the Standards Committee.

The Committee Members also conveyed their thanks to the Chairman for running all of the meetings in a smooth and efficient manner.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

- Mrs Kiran Khanna - Monitoring Officer
- Mrs Iram Malik - Senior Democratic Services Officer