

## Standards Committee

### Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2015

#### Present

Independent Co-opted Members: A. Isles – in the Chair  
Councillors Andrews, Evans, and Trotman  
Ringway Parish Council - Councillor C O'Donovan

#### Apologies

Mr A Eastwood

#### ST/15/01 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 19 June were submitted for approval. Members noted that the Council planned to fill the vacancies on the committee after the election in May.

#### Decision

To approve the minutes of the committee meeting held on 19 June 2014 as a correct record.

#### ST/15/02 Revised Use of Council Resources for Members

The Committee considered a report of the City Solicitor which presented a revised draft Use of Resources Guidance for members. The document aimed to ensure that clear guidance was provided for members on how to use council resources correctly.

The revised document updates the existing guidance in the constitution and incorporates advice that was provided to the Council from Standards for England. The report outlined the key changes from the existing guidance, and the Committee was invited to make amendments and recommend to Council to adopt the revised guidance.

The Committee suggested two minor amendments to the wording of the guidance were required for clarification. The first of these was specifically to change the wording under the section on specific provisions for booking accommodation on page 7 of the report to "*The rules governing the booking and use of accommodation, meeting rooms and Council offices must be strictly adhered to*". The second change under the last sentence of section 3.2 The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity to read "*It is permissible... of candidates for electoral purposes*".

A member asked for clarification on the reasons why section 7, on the restricted use of USB and removable media did not refer to a specific policy. The City Solicitor's representative agreed to review this and add clarification on the policy.

#### Decision

To recommend that Council adopt the revised Use of Council Resources Guidance

for Members with to the inclusion of the proposed amendments.

### **ST/15/03 Social Media Guidance for Members**

The Committee considered a report of the City Solicitor which set out guidance for members on the use of social media. The Committee was asked to review the guidance and recommend it to Council for adoption. The draft guidance recognised that social media is a key form of communication for councillors and as such, it aims to provide a set of principles to abide by, guidance on privacy settings and copyright, and advice on minimising the risks of malware and criminal activity.

The Committee welcomed the guidance and acknowledged that the difficulties in separating public and private persona when using social media. They suggested a couple of minor amendments and stressed the importance of ensuring that new and existing councillors were provided with the suitable training. Member discussed the induction training that was offered to newly elected councillors and agreed that it should be reviewed. The Committee asked to consider the content of the training plan for new members at a future meeting.

#### **Decision**

1. To ask officers to provide a report on the content of the training plans for new members to a future meeting of the committee.
2. To approve the Social Media Guidance for Members with the amendments suggested.

### **ST/15/04 Refresh of the Code of Corporate Governance**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy City Treasurer which described the key changes to the proposed review of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance. The Committee was invited to comment on the draft before it was considered and adopted (as part of the constitution) by the Council at its annual meeting on 20 May 2015.

The Code of Corporate Governance is a public statement setting out the governance standards that the Council will meet. The Code lists the Council's values and sets out the organisation's partnership governance standards. It also describes how the Council will ensure members and officers behave in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance. The revised draft reflected key policy and legislation changes that have implications for the Council since the last time it was reviewed.

Following feedback from the Audit Committee in 2013, the Manchester Youth Council had been consulted on the code. Their comments have led to the establishment of ten commitments to good governance. These aimed to ensure that the principles of the Code were explained in a clear, understandable way.

The Committee approved the proposed changes outlined in the report and particularly welcomed the consultation and input of the Youth Council. A member

referred to the Partnership Governance Framework and commented that the Code did not contain information about governance arrangements in place between the Council and outside bodies. The Performance and Intelligence Lead, Core and Growth and Neighbourhoods agreed to review this and set out any arrangements in the Code.

**Decision**

To approve the revised Code of Corporate Governance subject to the addition of information about governance arrangements with outside bodies.