

Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2019

Present

Independent Co-opted Member: N Jackson – In the Chair
Councillors Andrews, Lanchbury and A. Simcock
Ringway Parish Council: Councillor O'Donovan
Independent Person: A Eastwood

Apologies

Councillors Evans and Kilpatrick
Independent Co-opted Member: G Linnell

ST/19/16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held 13 June 2019 were submitted for approval. Members discussed whether a Member/Member Protocol was required following confirmation from the Head of Governance that other authorities did not have one. The Chair commented that mechanisms should exist through the Group Officers and Party Whips to deal with such complaints and that a Member could make a complaint against another Member under the Code of Conduct if other avenues failed.

A Member commented that such a code would formalise any protocol through inclusion in the Code of Conduct. The City Solicitor stated that consideration could be given to this and that she would also consult with the Group Officers and Party Whips had arrangements to ensure that they dealt with Member/Member complaints appropriately and would offer any advice if required.

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2019 as a correct record.

ST/19/17 Standards Committee - Annual Report

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor that updated Members on the matters within the remit of the Committee since November 2018. The Head of Governance introduced the report.

In response to a question from a Member in relation to the number of DBS checks completed for Councillors, the Head of Governance reported that an additional drop in session had been arranged in October and that an up to date figure of the number completed would be provided at a future meeting. A Member commented that if any DBS checks were still outstanding Officers should inform Group Officers so this could then be followed up.

A Member commented that he had attended an Induction Programme that had been open to all Members following a request by Standards Committee in March 2019. He

commented that he had found this to be very informative and useful, however stated that there were a number of Members that had not attended the training despite being booked on, adding this was a waste of resources and enquired what could be done to address it. The Head of Governance stated that generally Members attendance at training had improved and this activity was reported to the Committee. She said if an issue was identified that needed addressing she would discuss this with the Group Whips to encourage Members attendance, noting the cost of non-attendance when external training had been arranged. The Chair commented that it would be beneficial if the Groups could resolve this issue informally as future reports to the Committee on the operation of the Member Development Strategy would identify the resources spent on Member Development, including costs wasted due to non attendance

Decisions

1. To note the work done this year since the last annual report in November 2018 by this Committee and the Council's Monitoring Officer to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors.
2. To recommend that this report should be forwarded to full Council for assurance on standards issues.

ST/19/18 Draft Code of Corporate Governance

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that proposed a revised draft Code of Corporate Governance which was in accordance with published guidance. Compliance with this Code would be monitored on an annual basis through the Council's Annual Governance Statement. The Performance, Research and Intelligence Officer introduced the report.

Members noted that the Code would be submitted to Audit Committee on 10 December 2019. The Code formed part of the Council's Constitution and would therefore then be submitted to full Council, prior to adoption and inclusion within a revised Constitution in 2020.

The Chair stated that she welcomed the Code commenting that it was a very accessible and informative document. In response to a comment from the Chair regarding referencing within the Code all key identity groups with whom the Council engaged, the Performance, Research and Intelligence Officer stated that the document would be reviewed and consideration would be given to this, in consultation with the Equalities Team.

Decision

To note the Council's draft governance standards as set out in the draft Code of Corporate Governance.

ST/19/19 Members' Update on Ethical Governance

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor that sought Members comments and approval on the draft Members' Update for November 2019. A member of the Committee recommended that the document should also be circulated to all Independent Persons and Co-Opted Members. The Committee endorsed this recommendation.

Decision

To approve the content of the draft Members' Update for circulation to all Members, Independent Persons and Co-Opted Members.

ST/18/20 Work Programme

The Committee received the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which allowed the Committee the opportunity to consider and revise its work programme for future meetings.

The Chair recommended that in addition to the items already listed that a report on Partnership Arrangements be submitted to the March 2020 meeting. A Member also recommended that the report on Member training be submitted to the March 2020 meeting to ensure that training, including the Members induction programme, was considered prior to the May elections

Decision

To agree the Work Programme subject to the above amendments.