

Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2022

Present

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

Apologies:

Independent Co-opted Member: G Linnell, Councillor Good

ST/22/01 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held 4 November 2021 were submitted for approval.

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021 as a correct record.

ST/22/02 Standards Committee - Annual Report

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor that provided an update on the matters within the remit of the Committee since the beginning of February 2021.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and description of the Roles of the Standards Committee and the Council's Monitoring Officer;
- Update on matters within the remit of the Standards Committee since its last Annual Report;
- Update on matters considered by the Committee; and
- Complaints against Councillors, including a summary of the findings.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were: -

- That Councillors who had yet to update their Register of Interests may wish to consider this. It was noted that a reminder to members on this was scheduled for just after the May elections

Decisions

To note the report and forward this report to full Council for assurance on standards issues.

ST/22/03 Member Development and Training

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor that provided an update on the operation and efficacy of the Member Development Strategy and training delivered since February 2021. The report sought the Standards Committee's comments on and approval of the Member Development Strategy 2022-24.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- An overview of the Member Development Strategy and its key objectives;
- A description of the delivery of the New Member Induction programme 2021;
- Induction feedback from May 2021;
- Proposals for New Member Induction 2022;
- Member training February 2021 – January 2022;
- Attendance information;
- Findings from the evaluation of training;
- Scheduled training for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year;
- Training Programme May 2022- April 2023; and
- Training for co-opted members.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were: -

- An invitation to the full Induction programme should be offered to new members (it was confirmed that the two members elected at by elections had attended induction sessions)
- GDPR and Cyber Security training was in place for members and it was requested that all members should access this training
- The "Listening In Action" process was currently under review as it was felt this process worked better as a face-to-face meeting which COVID regulations had not allowed for previously
- The recent Peer Review had highlighted the strength of Scrutiny at the Council and member training had played a part in this.
- ICT services were working hard with assisting in the use of technology but there were improvements to be made (it was noted that ICT services had taken on board the varying levels of IT understanding across staff and members)
- That an update would be fed back on the subject of DBS checks for members
- That mandatory training days should be inputted into members' diaries well in advance (ideally at the start of the municipal year to ensure maximum attendance)
- That some training/knowledge around using the Casework software could be offered via training and/or shared between members
- That ongoing support for using IT equipment was to be reviewed
- That members should be consulted on their IT needs to feed back to the ICT service
- That there were some useful comments to take away regarding approach for ICT issues

Decisions

1. To approve the Member Development Strategy 2022-24.
2. To note the report on training delivered since February 2021.

ST/22/04 Social Media Guidance for Members update

The Committee considered the report of the City Solicitor that provided an update on the operation and efficacy of the Social Media Guidance for Members ('the Guidance') as well as the provision of training for members on the Guidance.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Providing an introduction and background
- Information relating to the Operation of the Guidance; and
- Member training.
- Minor revisions proposed to the Guidance

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were: -

- That it was good to see that none of the complaints on members' conduct were in relation to the use of social media

Decision

To note the report, approve the minor revisions and request that the Social Media Guidance for Members (as revised) be circulated to all Members.

ST/21/05 Work Programme for the Standards Committee

The Committee considered the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit that invited the members of the Standards Committee to consider its work programme for future meetings and make any revisions.

Decision

To note the report and agree the Work Programme.