

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Standards Sub-Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 7 April 2017 commencing at 10.00 am.

Present: Councillor Mrs Gillian Bardsley (Vice-Chairman – In the Chair)
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn
Councillor Mrs Pat Mewis
Councillor Roger Patterson
Parish Councillor – John Hill
Parish Councillor – Chris Elkington

Also in Attendance Councillor Jackie Brockway

In Attendance:
Alan Robinson Strategic Lead Governance and People/Monitoring Officer
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer
Margaret Freeman Governance and Civic Assistant

Apologies: Councillor David Cotton (Chairman)

Membership: No substitutes were appointed.

9 MINUTES

(a) Minutes of Meeting held on 9 December 2016

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards Sub- Committee held on 9 December 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

10 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

All Members present declared a non-pecuniary interest in that any newly approved Code would directly affect them.

11 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Committee gave consideration to a report which presented a Final Draft version of the Revised Members' Code of Conduct and Operating Procedures.

Following previous consideration by this Sub-Committee in December 2016, the Governance and Audit Committee in January 2017, and a Member workshop in February 2017, a number of further amendments and additions had been made, arising from comments and suggestions received at these meetings.

The amendments were presented for further consideration and agreement was sought for the finalised documents to be submitted to Annual Council in May 2017 for adoption.

Furthermore it was being proposed that an all Member workshop be held in advance of Annual Council in order to present the content of the Code to the wider membership in an informal setting.

In presenting the report the Monitoring Officer outlined the main revisions which had been made and the rationale for each, as set out in table two of the report.

Debate ensued and visiting Member Councillor Brockway addressed the meeting, to outline concerns she had regarding the operating procedures and areas she felt needed to be addressed, having recently supported a Councillor through a complaint.

The Sub-Committee debated at length the points Councillor Brockway had raised and in response commented the majority of cases were straight forward and easily dealt with and therefore it was important that any set of rules did not make operating impossible.

However they were in agreement that the following points should be further addressed in the final document presented for adoption.

- It be made clear that following an investigation if the MO makes the decision to proceed to a hearing, there will be full disclosure of all witness statements given to all parties;
- The method for recording any interviews will be a decision for the Investigating Officer, however an audio recording will be taken on request;
- It be made clear that Hearings can proceed in the absence of the subject member if the MO is not satisfied with their reason for non attendance.
- The reasons for the MO deciding to proceed to a hearing will be documented and shared with all parties.

It was also suggested that the amended Code and Procedures should be reviewed in a year's time to ensure it had provided the Monitoring Officer with the ability to operate as intended.

It was therefore proposed and seconded that an additional recommendation be added to the report, namely that the Sub-Committee, meet at least annually to review the Operating Procedures and complaint statistics / outcomes.

A number of minor typographical errors for rectification were also identified.

On that basis, it was **RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) having reviewed and made comment on the final draft version of the revised Code of Conduct and Operating Procedures, the points made throughout

the debate be further considered by the Monitoring Officer and those amendments detailed above be incorporated, prior to its submission to Governance and Audit Committee;

- (b) an all Member workshop be held on 25 April 2017, in advance of Annual Council in order to present the content of the draft revised Code to the wider Membership;
- (c) delegated Authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer to incorporate any further amendments required to the Code of Conduct and Operating Procedures, arising from the Governance and Audit Committee Meeting or the above Member workshop, prior to it being submitted to Annual Council for adoption in May 2017; and
- (d) the Standards Sub-Committee be convened at least annually to review the Operating Procedures and complaint statistics / outcomes.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am.

Chairman