
Standards Committee

Report of the meeting held on 3rd March 2016.

Matter for Decision

10. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

By way of a report from the Corporate Director (Resources) (this item appears separately on the Council Agenda as an item for decision, Item No. 5d refers), the Committee has considered the reappointment of the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons and of the Parish Council representatives whose terms of office expire on 30th April 2016. The law requires the Council to appoint one or more Independent Persons, who must be consulted before the authority takes a decision to investigate any allegation against a Member under the Code of Conduct. Independent Persons, furthermore, may be consulted by a Member of the authority against whom an allegation has been made, as well as by a Parish Councillor in similar circumstances.

The two Parish Council representatives similarly make valuable contributions to the Standards Committee.

In the circumstances and in order that their understanding, experience and training received are retained, the Committee has decided to reappoint Mrs Debbie Townsend and Mr Paul McCloskey as Parish Council representatives for a further two years, and

RECOMMENDS

that the Council affirm the re-appointment of Mrs Gillian Holmes and Mr Peter Baker to the posts of Lead and Deputy Independent Persons respectively for a further two-year period to 30th April 2018 without the need for further ratification in each year by the Council at its Annual Meeting.

Matters for Information

11. COMPLAINTS POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The Committee has endorsed a new policy and guidance on customer feedback. The policy is guidance contained in the Customer Services Strategy. It defines what is treated as a compliment and

what a complaint is. The Committee has suggested that it should be made clear that complaints about Members are treated separately.

The Internal Guidance on Customer Feedback is intended to be flexible and ensure all formal feedback is logged and acted on. The Committee has established that Members' role in respect of feedback is to set the policy framework, receive monitoring information annually on the types of feedback received and on lessons learned to improve services and ensure the process is operating as intended.

The Policy is augmented by a formal process for managing unreasonable behaviour by complainants.

12. UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT AND REGISTER OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

The Monitoring Officer has updated the Committee on the adoption of a Code of Conduct by Town and Parish Councils and the receipt and publication of register of interests forms on behalf of District and Town and Parish Councillors. The Monitoring Officer has a duty to establish and maintain a register of disclosable pecuniary interests.

The Committee has been particularly pleased to note that Disclosable Pecuniary Interest forms have been received from all Parish Councillors. The forms of all District Councillors also are published. The Panel has commended Officers' achievements in this respect.

13. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

Members have been acquainted with the implications for the Committee of a revised Constitution following a review. Subject to the recommendation by the Corporate Governance Panel and adoption by the Council, the Committee's remit will become the responsibility of a Sub-Committee of the Corporate Governance Panel.

14. COUNCILLOR ANDREW HANSARD

As it will be his last meeting before retiring as a District Councillor, the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Andrew Hansard, has expressed his gratitude to Members for their work and support. In return, Members have placed on record their view that Councillor Hansard has been an excellent Chairman and have wished him well in his retirement.

A Hansard
Chairman