

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE - 18/11/21

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE 18th November, 2021

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair); Councillors Bacon, Castledine-Dack, Collingham, Cooksey, Griffin and Hughes, along with Mr. A. Buckley and Mrs. M. Carroll (Parish Council Members) and also Mrs. A. Bingham, Mr. P. Edler and Mrs. M. Evers (Independent Members).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bennett-Sylvester, Mr. P. Horsfield (Monitoring Officer), Mrs. K. Penney (Independent Member), Mr. D. Roper-Newman (Independent Person) and Mr. R. Swann (Parish Council Member).

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Griffin declared a personal interest in Minute No. 23 (Complaints) on the grounds of having knowledge of one of the cases listed.

20. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for (Minute No. 22 and 23 – Review of Concerns Pursuant to the Whistleblowing and Consideration of Complaints) on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th September, 2021 were approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

The Chair had highlighted at the Council meeting that Parish Councillor Buckley and Parish Councillor Carroll's terms of office (Minute No. 12) would not be confirmed until the 29th September, 2021 and indicated they had left the meeting before confidential items were considered.

The Committee was updated in terms of Minute No. 13 (LGA Model Code of Conduct) which had been circulated to all Parish Council Clerks, referenced in the Members' Bulletin and had confirmation from the LGA that training would be delivered in due course.

The Chair had also liaised with the Deputy Leader, whose portfolio covered Parish and Town Councils, following some instances of potential Code of Conduct breaches.

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The Committee was also advised that in terms of Minute No. 14 (Training) plans may be delayed during the pre-election period and it could be the New Year before the scheduled training was delivered.

The Chair also urged inclusion of a key of acronyms for future reports as per Minute No. 15 (Concerns Pursuant to the Whistleblowing Policy).

22. A REVIEW OF CONCERNS RAISED PURSUANT TO THE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Consideration was given to the report and appendix presented by the Deputy Monitoring Officer, which provided an overview of the Whistleblowing cases which have been received over the past year.

Particular reference was made to the appendix to the report which set out clearly the description of the concerns received and action taken.

Resolved:- That the whistleblowing concerns raised over the previous year and the actions taken to address these matters be noted.

23. CONSIDERATION OF COMPLAINTS

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Deputy Monitoring Officer, detailing the progress with the handling of complaints relating to breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and Town and Parish Councillors. The report listed the current cases of complaint and the action being taken in respect of each one.

Reference was made to each related case and recommended outcomes/actions identified were highlighted.

The Chair asked that actions/referrals on the schedule of complaints be dated accordingly.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

24. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair advised that there were no urgent items of business requiring the Committee's consideration.

25. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee be held on Thursday, 20th January, 2022 at the Town Hall, commencing at 2.00 p.m.