

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE - 07/03/24

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

7th March, 2024

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair); Councillors Griffin, Bacon, Yasseen, Parish Council Representatives Mr. A. Buckley, Mrs. M. Carroll and Mr. R. Swann and Independent Members Mrs. A. Bingham and Mr. P. Edler.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Z. Collingham, Hughes, Keenan and Wilson and Independent Member Mrs. K. Penney.

Also in attendance at the invitation of the Chair was Independent Persons Mr. P. Beavers and Mr. D. Roper-Newman.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

22. 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 Agenda Items 5. 6 and (Outcome of Sub-Committee Hearing, Considering of Whistleblowing Policy and Complaints) on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

23. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 9TH NOVEMBER, 2023

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th November, 2023 were approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

24. OUTCOME OF STANDARDS AND ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE HEARING RE ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT - THURCROFT PARISH COUNCILLOR D FRETWELL

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Deputy Monitoring Officer which set out the outcome of a Standards and Ethics Sub-Committee Hearing which took place on 19th February, 2024 in relation to an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct by Thurcroft Parish Councillor, David Fretwell.

Attached to the report was the full Decision Notice and the minutes of the hearing itself.

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In considering the detail the Committee asked if any lessons had been learnt from the outcome and from the evidence gathered. As part of the proceedings there had been several remarks, but with careful management by the Chair any potential disagreements were dissolved.

Details of the complaints were shared and the recommendations made by the Standards and Ethics Sub-Committee welcomed and duly noted.

The Monitoring Officer provided assurances that the relevant training would be delivered at a future Parish Council meeting.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the outcome of the Standards and Ethics Sub-Committee Hearing on 19th February, 2024 be noted.

25. 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 and to examine if there were any particular trends emerging.

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.

26. REVIEW 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.

Details were provided on each related case, without providing personal information, and recommended outcomes/actions identified were highlighted.

It was also noted that investigations/proceedings would cease if the Subject Member ceased to be either a Parish or Borough Councillor.

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

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27. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair advised that there were no urgent items of business requiring the Committee's consideration, but in doing so wished to place on record her sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone involved with the Standards and Ethics Committee from Elected, Parish and Independent Members, Independent Persons and associated officers.

In return the Vice-Chair, on behalf of the Committee, also wished to place on record the Committee's thanks to the way the Chair had conducted meetings in an open and fair manner and wished her well in her retirement.

28. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee be held on Thursday, 13th June, 2024, commencing at 2.00 p.m. at the Town Hall.