

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

13th March, 2025

Present:- Councillor Clarke (in the Chair); Councillors Beck, T. Collingham, Hall, Jackson and Keenan along with Mrs. M. Carroll (Parish Council Representative).

Also in attendance was Mr. P. Beavers (Independent Person) and a member of the public (open items only).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Monk, Mr. D. Roper-Newman (Independent Person) and Mrs. A. Bingham and Mrs. K. Penney (Independent Members).

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24. 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 Nos. 26 and 27 (Whistleblowing and Complaints) on the grounds that the appendices to those reports involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

25. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16TH JANUARY, 2025

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th January, 2025.

Reference was made to Minute No. 21 (Consultation on Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England) where it was confirmed the responses to the questions were forwarded onto Government on behalf of the Committee.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th January, 2025 were approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

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

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

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE - 13/03/25

Particular reference was made to the confidential 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.

27. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Service Manager, 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 confidential appendix to 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.

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

28. STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Service Manager which set out the draft Work Plan for the Standards and Ethics Committee for the period January to November, 2025.

The Committee was, therefore, requested to suggest any amendments, make further proposals for consideration and thereafter adopt a final version.

Proposals were in hand for a dedicated training session for all Members of the Committee. This training session had not been included on the Work Plan.

In agreeing the contents the Committee was advised that the Annual Report had been mistakenly included for March, but in fact would be included for June, 2025.

Resolved:- (1) That the draft Work Plan be received and the contents noted.

(2) That, subject to the Annual Report being included for June, 2025 the final Work Plan for the period January to November, 2025 be approved.

29. MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Service Manager which detailed a proposed review of the current membership of the Standards and Ethics Committee and how this could be refreshed.

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE - 13/03/25

The report set out in detail the establishment of the current membership and composition following the implementation of the Localism Act 2011.

It was noted the current Parish Council Members were appointed in June 2021 for a period of four years. The mechanism for selecting the three nominees would be a matter for the Town and Parish Councils through the Yorkshire Local Councils Association.

In respect of the two vacant Independent Members of the Committee, it was appropriate to advertise to try to fill these vacancies and renew this type of membership of the Committee.

Subject to the Committee's consent a report on proposed appointments to the Parish and Town Council Members and Independent Members should be submitted to the June meeting for approval.

Resolved:- (1) That arrangements for the nomination of Parish Council Members from the Parish and Town Councils in the Borough be approved.

(2) That the two vacant Independent Member roles on the Committee be advertised and recruited to.

30. URGENT BUSINESS

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

However, a training video was shown at the end of the meeting from Geldards Public Sector on Member Conduct. A copy of the slides would be circulated to all attendees and, if required, the video could again be made available prior to the commencing of the next meeting in June, 2025.