

# STANDARDS COMMITTEE

## Monday, 20 July 2020

**PRESENT** – Councillors, , Afzal, Casey, Connor, Davies, Khonat, Rawat, Whittle and Wright.

**OFFICERS** - David Fairclough (Director of HR, Legal and Governance) and Asad Laher

### RESOLUTIONS

#### 1 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcome everyone to the virtual meeting.

Apologies were received from Tassadaq Hussain

#### 2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020, be agreed as a correct record.

#### 3 **Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED** – There were no declarations of interest received

#### 4 **Consultation on Draft Model Code of Conduct**

Members of the Committee were asked to review the proposed revised Draft Model Code of Conduct and consider the response to the Consultation. The Committee were also asked to advise the Monitoring Officer of its views on the Consultation questions and to then delegate to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, the task of submitting the Committee's response to the Consultation questions.

The Local Government Association (LGA) had committed to reviewing the current model member code of conduct, as recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life's report into Local Government Ethical Standards. The LGA held an event on Civility in Public Life with a range of stakeholders at the end of last year and three consultation workshops at the beginning of this year. LGA consultants have also examined examples of good practice, both in local government and other professions. The LGA consultation draft model member code of conduct is the result of this initial work. It is the intention to create additional guidance, working examples and explanatory text. The LGA are inviting and would very much welcome comment on the consultation draft.

Members of the Committee had the Code of Conduct consultation questions and the Committee were asked to advise the Monitoring Officer of its views on the Consultation questions and to then delegate to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, the task of submitting the Committee's response to the Consultation questions.

All Members of the Council had also been sent full details of the consultation and they can also comment directly individually to the consultation.

The consultation on the draft member code of conduct runs until Monday 17 August. All Members of the Council have also been invited to join the LGA at a number of webinars over the summer should they wish to discuss the draft code in more detail.

The feedback from the consultation will help the LGA to develop a final draft, which will be reviewed by the LGA's Executive Advisory Board before being presented to the next LGA General Assembly, which they hope will be held in the Autumn of 2020.

The Chair invited the Members of the Committee to give their thoughts and recommendations on the proposed revised draft Model Code of Conduct. The Committee and Independent Members discussed each consultation question in depth and views and opinions were considered.

**RESOLVED** – That the Members advise the Monitoring Officer of their views on the Consultation questions and for the Monitoring Officer to submit the Committee's response to the questions

## **5 Local Government Ethical Standards**

A report was brought to Committee on Standards in Public Life of January 2019 on Local Government Ethical Standards.

Members of the Committee made recommendations in their January 2019 report on Local Government Ethical Standards.

In that report the Committee identified some best practice recommendations which represent a benchmark for ethical practice and which they expect any local authority should implement.

The Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Governance were reviewing the recommendations made and the Committee was asked to note that at the next meeting a full update would be provided alongside any recommendations for change, acknowledging the consultation on the revised Model Code of Conduct set out separately within this agenda.

The LGA had committed to reviewing the current model member code of conduct, as recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life's report into Local Government Ethical Standards.

The Standards Committee has the role within the Council (as set out in the Constitution), to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members and to assist councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members Code of Conduct.

In reviewing the best practice recommendations as set out in the Appendix the Head of Secretariat of the Committee on Standards in Public Life has written recently to Chief Executives advising that although they "indicated that they would review the implementation of those best practice recommendations in 2020, We completely understand the unexpected and unprecedented

pressures that local authorities are facing this year with COVID-19, so we are not of course asking for an immediate response.”

Some of the recommendations were related also to LGA Code of Conduct report separately on this Agenda, however a full report will be presented to the Standards Committee at the next meeting in October addressing each individual recommendation although a number are already incorporated in the Council’s current arrangements.

**RESOLVED –** That the report be noted.

**6      Complaints Update**

The Monitoring Officer updated the Committee on complaints received regarding Members under the Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct for Members up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

In February 2020 through to June 2020 there had been 2 initial complaints received by the Monitoring Officer in respect of two different Councillors however when sent details of how to formally register the complaints to allow for investigation and consideration the complainants did not proceed with their complaints.

Up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 there were no further complaints received under the Members Complaints Procedures.

**RESOLVED –** That the report be noted.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
at which the minutes were confirmed