

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

4<sup>th</sup> January 2018

**PRESENT** – *Councillors Lee (Vice -Chair), Gunn, Z Khan, Tassadaq Hussain, and Paul Fletcher.*

**Also Present** – Sian Roxborough, Asad Laher, Christian Williams-White, Alan Eastwood, and Phil Llewellyn.

### RESOLUTIONS

#### 12. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillors Fazal, McFall, Brookfield and Julie Slater.

#### 13. Minutes of the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

Councillor Julie Gunn verbally reported on the response to her e-mail to all Members on the best time of day for Members training, and advised that the majority of respondents favoured a 6pm start. Some Members had suggested a double session, ie. two topics in one night as with less Councillors after May 2018, time would be of the essence.

There followed discussion on the On-line Portal and its better utilisation, and it was noted that there had been no training for Co-opted Members, and perhaps there could be a dedicated section on the Portal for them.

It was agreed that there would be a report submitted to the next meeting on what was available on the On-line Portal.

#### 14. Declarations of Interest in items on this Agenda

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

#### 15. Protocol on Member/Officer Relations

A report was submitted regarding a review of the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations.

At their meeting in January 2015 the Committee agreed a revised Protocol on Member/Officer relations. Following 3 years operation it was considered by the Committee at their meeting in October 2017 for a review of operation to be undertaken at the next meeting. The current Protocol was approved by Council and contained in the Constitution of the Council.

The current arrangements subject to some amendments made following recommendations from the Standards Committee in January 2015 had been in place since the enactment of the Localism Act 2011 and reflected the current legislative framework.

Although to date there had been relatively low activity in relation to matters arising relating to the Member/Officer Protocol it was suggested to nevertheless be appropriate to review the current Protocol.

In recent times the Monitoring Officer and Council Solicitor had both had to advise Members as regards handling 'social care matters' and 'other litigation matters' which Members may be approached in their community role about. It was suggested therefore this advice could be updated in a revised protocol.

Following the general discussion where Members noted the need for officers to be supported in their dealings with 'strong' Members, it was agreed that:

- The Protocol needed to reflect that Members could get into trouble with the Courts if they got involved in particular cases, ie. Social Care and they could negatively impact on the Council's case.
- The Protocol needed to emphasise that Signposting by Members was fine – helping constituents find the right Council Officers to talk to.
- The Protocol needed to set out that Members had to demonstrate the 'Need to Know'.
- The Protocol also needed to be updated to take into account Social Media.

**RESOLVED** – That the amended Member/Officer Protocol be presented to the next meeting of the Committee, for approval, ahead of submission to Full Council.

## **16. Complaints Update to the Standards Committee**

Members received an update on complaints received regarding Members conduct under the Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct for Members.

Updates were presented on the three cases reported to the October meeting. The report covered the period up to Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The Committee would be updated at its next meeting of any complaints received and registered after this date.

**RESOLVED** – That the Update report be noted and it also be noted that there were no complaints in progress as at 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

Signed.....  
Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were signed  
Date.....