

STANDARDS AND CONDUCT COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 9TH MARCH, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor E Nash in the Chair

Councillors B Gettings, P Harrand and B Selby

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor M Hughes – Horsforth Town Council
Mr G Tollefson – Independent Person

1 Appeals against refusal of inspection of documents

There were no appeals against refusals of inspection of documents.

2 Exempt Information - Possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

3 Late items

There were no late items.

4 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

5 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors J Jarosz, A Sobel and C Townsley.

6 Minutes - 3 March 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 3 March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

7 Matters arising from the Minutes

It was confirmed that Parish and Town Council clerks had been given quarterly reminders to prompt their Members to review their Registers of Interest.

8 Annual Report of the Standards and Conduct Committee

The report of the City Solicitor presented the Committee with an annual report relating to matters within the Committee's terms of reference. Council Procedure Rule 2.2 (f) stipulates that the annual report of the committee must be referred to full Council for consideration; this being to fully support the duty

of the Authority to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members of the Council.

Members were asked to refer the report to full Council for consideration so that reassurances could be received as to how the Authority's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct (by Members and Co-opted Members of the Council) was being discharged.

Members' attention was brought to the following:

- Due to the anticipated election of a larger than normal number of new Members in the forthcoming elections, assurances were given regarding the training and induction programme.
- Sensitive interests – it was reported that where requests from Members to withhold details of pecuniary interests from the public register of interests, that these were considered by the Monitoring Officer and granted where there were reasonable grounds to do so.
- Proposed amendments to the Members Code of Conduct and Procedures for considering complaints – these were highlighted in appendices to the report. Members were asked for their support to these amendments which could be implemented by the City Solicitor under delegated powers.
- A consultation on local government ethical standards was being undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Members agreed that the Chair write to the Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life to highlight:
 - That local government could add value to the analysis of responses to the consultation and that Leeds City Council would be happy to assist and bring a local practitioner's input to these considerations, and recommend;
 - That consideration be given to the removal of the requirement for local elected members to be required to publically register their home address. This being because there appears to be a growing trend to victimise local elected members and there appears no reason for local elected members to be treated any differently from MPs in this regard and;
 - That a parallel requirement for local government to that contained in the Ministerial Code be considered to prohibit former Councillors with direct knowledge and insight of decisions within a local authority from lobbying the authority of which they were a member for a period of two years.
- Summary of Complaints – there were the same number of complaints as in the previous year with one complaint moved to the second stage of the complaints procedure before the complainant received a satisfactory outcome.
- Proposed changes to the Social Media Guidance Note for Members.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the matters set out in the annual report be referred to full Council for consideration.
- (2) That the proposed amendments for clarification proposed by the City Solicitor to the Members Code of Conduct and the Procedure for considering complaints be supported.
- (3) That the proposed amendments to the Social Media Guidance Note for Members be supported.
- (4) That the consultation undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life be noted and that the Chair write to Lord Brew, Chair of that committee to highlight the views expressed.