

Standards Committee

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2021 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Paul Oatway QPM (Chairman), Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Matthew Dean,
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Cllr Bill Parks, Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney, Cllr Pip Ridout,
Cllr Mike Sankey, Cllr Iain Wallis and Cllr Derek Walters

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Allison Bucknell.

2 **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2021 were presented for consideration. The minutes of the Hearing Sub-Committee held on 7 April 2021 were also provided. It was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2021 as a true and correct record.

To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee held on 7 April 2021.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman announced there had been approximately 25 applications for the 4 co-opted non-voting members of the committee positions. He would meet with the Monitoring Officer to shortlist candidates ahead of interviews in July.

5 **Public Participation**

No statements or questions were submitted.

6 **Status Report on Code of Conduct Complaints**

A report was received updating the Committee on the status of Code of Conduct complaints received since the last ordinary meeting, and the number and outcome of complaints received in the last year. Since adoption of the revised arrangements under Protocol 11 in January 2020, approximately one third of complaints were dismissed by the Monitoring Officer prior to consideration by the Assessment Sub-Committee.

There was a discussion regarding timescales for completion of various stages of the process and where this had not occurred. The Chairman noted that due to pressures arising from Covid-19 the proposed dip sampling of complaints to monitor progress had not taken place. This would now begin as of June 2021, and he would regularly report back to the Committee in future meetings following review of anonymised complaints and whether processes and targets had been met, or the reason for any variance.

Details were also sought on the numbers of complaints regarding parish councillors versus those regarding unitary councillors, and confirmation the figures in the report did not double count where someone was both a unitary and a parish councillor.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To note the report update.

7 **Standards Assessment Sub-Committee**

A report was received on the Committee appointing members to the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee, which undertook initial assessment of Code of Conduct complaints.

A member raised issues relating to legal support and advice to previous Review Sub-Committees, with the Monitoring Officer stating that the service would receive any feedback and consider how the processes could be improved further. Other members noted the introduction of the new process for Assessment Sub-Committees in January 2020, with monthly meetings and standing membership, and considered that this had had a positive effect on the process.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) **To appoint five members to the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee for the forthcoming year as follows:**

Cllr Richard Britton

**Cllr Ernie Clark
Cllr Gordon King
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson
Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney**

- 2) To delegate appointment of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee to the Sub-Committee.**

8 Constitution Focus Group

A report was received recommending reappointment of the Constitution Focus Group, a working group which reviewed sections of the Constitutions on behalf of the Committee ahead of making recommendations to Full Council.

It was also recommended that the Chairman of Council be appointed to the Focus Group, and that the Committee determine which member or substitute of the Committee should be its representative on the Focus Group.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) To approve the terms of reference of the Constitution Focus Group as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, with the inclusion of the role of Chairman of Wiltshire Council among its membership.**
- 2) To appoint Cllr Richard Britton to the Focus Group.**

9 Updates to the Constitution

A report was received proposing that the Committee make recommendations to Council to make minor amendments to Part 3B and Protocol 10 of the Constitution.

The changes were to amend the terms of reference of the Health and Wellbeing Board at Part 3B, to reflect recent changes to its membership, and a series of minor amendments to the Governance Reporting Arrangements at Protocol 10. The Protocol 10 changes also included addition of reference to the Stone Circle companies established by the Council. The Audit and Governance Committee had considered and approved the proposals.

Following brief discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To recommend Full Council approve the proposed revisions to Part 3B as detailed in Appendix A of the report, and the proposed revisions to Protocol 10 as detailed in Appendix B of the report.

10 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 22 July 2021.

11 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 3.10 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services,
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