

# MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 13 December 2012 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Duwayne Brooks, Alan Hall, Helen Klier, Jim Mallory and Pauline Morrison.

Independent members: Hannah Le Vey, David Roper-Newman and Leslie Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT: Sally Hawkins

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Paul Maslin and from Cathy Sullivan and Gill Butler.

## 1. Election of Chair and ViceChair

Councillor Mallory observed that owing to statutory changes, this would be the first meeting of the Standards Committee chaired by an elected member. He said despite the enforced changes Independent Members would continue to be regarded as equals, playing a full part in the work of the Committee. He paid tribute to the outgoing Chair, Sally Hawkins, who was present as an observer. He noted she would maintain her involvement with the Council by serving as the Independent person in the Complaints Procedure.

RESOLVED That Councillor Mallory be appointed as the chair for the remainder of the municipal year and that Councillor Morrison be appointed as vice chair for the remainder the municipal year

## 2. Declaration of interests

None were made.

## 3. Minutes

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting held on June 6 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## 4. Appointments to subcommittees

RESOLVED That

(i) Councillors Daby, Fletcher, Klier, Hall and Ibitson and Leslie Thomas, Gill Butler and Matthew Hill be members of Standards Sub Committee A.

(ii) Councillors Brooks, Jeffrey, Mallory, Maslin and Morrison and Cathy Sullivan, David Roper-Newman and Hannah Le Vey be members of Standards Sub Committee B.

(iii) the remit of both Sub Committees be identical as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

## **5. Introduction to the ethical framework in Lewisham**

Kath Nicholson, Head of Law and Monitoring Officer made a presentation on the ethical framework in Lewisham following which she invited members to ask questions and to comment on any training needs required.

Councillor Hall asked how breaches of the Officer Code of conduct were treated and was informed these were disciplinary matters. He asked how any overview of such breaches was taken and the Head of Law believed this would form part of the Management Report but that she would confirm this after the meeting.

The Chair suggested new Councillors elected in 2014 should be required to undergo ethical training and that the Committee should consider this further prior to the 2014 election.

Councillor Hall asked for a report reviewing how other local authorities have embedded their Standards regime to be presented in the autumn of 2013.

**RESOLVED** That a review of training needs for members be added to the Work Programme

## **6. Compliance with Member Code of Conduct**

Kath Nicholson, Head of Law and Monitoring Officer presented the item and the Committee noted the

continued effectiveness of the Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED That no revisions be notified to the Council regarding the Code of Conduct.

## **7. Work programme**

Kath Nicholson, Head of Law and Monitoring Officer presented the item and invited the Committee to comment.

The Chair identified a review of the implementation of the Code of Conduct and training needs for members generally as useful additions to the work programme.

RESOLVED That the Work Programme shown in paragraph 3.3 of the report be agreed subject to the inclusion of the revisions suggested by the Chair.

## **8. Annual complaints report**

Peter Gasden the Head of Strategy & Performance in the Customer Services Directorate presented the report.

The Chair noted the report had already been rigorously scrutinised by the Public Accounts Select Committee.

Mr Roper Newman congratulated the Council on being able to see a reduction in the number of complaints made at a time of austerity when many services were the subject of reductions.

The Committee debated the role of the Independent Adjudicator and concluded the role added value to the process.

RESOLVED That the report be received and that no revisions be suggested to the council's complaints policy.