

# MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 7 May 2013 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Obajimi Adefiranye, Duwayne Brooks, Julia Fletcher, Alan Hall, Ami Ibitson, Helen Klier, Jim Mallory (Chair), Pauline Morrison (Vice-Chair) and Sam Owolabi-Oluyole

Independent members: David Roper-Newman, Cathy Sullivan, Hannah Le Vay and Leslie Thomas

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stella Jeffrey and Gill Butler and Matthew Hill.

## 9. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

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

## 10. Declaration of interests

None was declared.

## 11. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to a slight amendment to reflect the fact that Councillor Jeffrey offered apologies for absence in advance of the meeting.

## 12. Training Presentation

There was a discussion about training needs and importance of training that will support members of the Committee. It was suggested that it would be very helpful to have a comprehensive training programme in the new year to coincide with the beginning of the 4 year cycle after next years local elections.

## 13. Appointments to 2 Sub-Committees

RESOLVED that

Councillors Adefiranye, Brooks, Ibitson, Jeffrey and Mallory and Gill Butler, Matthew Hill and Leslie Thomas be members of Standards Sub Committee A.

Councillors Fletcher, Hall, Klier, Morrison and Owolabi-Oluyole and David Roper-Newman, Cathy Sullivan and Hannah Le Vay be members of Standards Sub Committee B.

#### **14. Local Code Corporate Governance Review of Compliance 2012-13**

Paul Aladenika, Principal Policy Officer, introduced the report and explained that this is a standard report that is presented to the Committee on an annual basis. It was further explained that the detailed results of the review are at Appendix 2 to the report.

A discussion followed on the decision making section of the report and it was explained that a few reports were pulled up to check that they comply with the Council's requirements. It was explained that the reports chosen were simply to give a flavour of the sort of reports considered by Mayor and Cabinet.

In response to questions raised by members of the Committee, Kath Nicholson, Head of Law explained that what is summarised is where the decision does not follow the logic set out in the report. Where officer advice is not followed a summary as to why will follow.

It was commented that the Code does not do justice to all that the Council actually does in complying with its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The Code could be more explicit on what the Council does in this regard.

It was further commented that the Code in some areas seems over generalised and it was suggested that perhaps something more explicit and which strengthens the Code can be adopted in the future.

It was agreed that these comments be taken on board on any review.

RESOLVED that subject to the comments and suggestions made the outcome of the review of the Local Code of Corporate Governance be endorsed.

#### **15. Review of Whistleblowing Policy**

Kath Nicholson, Head of Law and Monitoring Officer introduced the report and explained that there had been seven referrals since the last report considered by the Standards Committee. This demonstrated that people are aware of the policy and do make referrals under it. Kath Nicholson also explained that she does refer whistleblowers to alternative forums for resolution where appropriate.

Kath Nicholson explained the two proposed amendments to the policy to reflect changes of personnel and to accurately reflect the Council's current audit arrangements.

RESOLVED

to note the referrals under Councils' Whistleblowing Policy as set out in the report and reported to the Committee and to agree the proposed amendments to the Whistleblowing Policy.