

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Minutes of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE which was open to the press and public, held at LEWISHAM TOWN HALL, CATFORD, SE6 4RU on WEDNESDAY 23 JULY 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Present

Councillors Obajimi Adefiranye, Peter Bernards, Brenda Dacres, Colin Elliott, Simon Hooks, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Helen Klier and Pauline Morrison

Independent members: Gill Butler, Hannah Le Vay, David Roper-Newman and Cathy Sullivan.

Apologies received from Councillors Alan Hall, Hilary Moore and Leslie Thomas QC.

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<u>ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR</u> RESOLVED that Pauline Morrison be elected as Vice Chair of the Standards Committee for the municipal year 2014 – 15.
2	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> None was declared.
3	<u>MINUTES</u> RESOLVED that the minutes of the Committee meetings held on the 26 March and 11 June 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
4	<u>REVIEW OF LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 2013/14</u> 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.

Minute
No.

Action

A brief discussion followed and it was agreed that Recommendation 3.2 and 3.3 have already been covered and the only relevant recommendation is for the Committee to consider and endorse the outcomes of the review.

Further discussion on the review followed and whilst acknowledging the huge amount of work carried out by the Council in relation to consultation, a query was raised as to how the Council responds to the views of consultees. It was suggested that in future the Committee obtain some information on this. Officers agreed to look into this and would seek to provide examples in the next review.

RESOLVED that the outcomes of the review be endorsed.

5 INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS

Kath Nicholson, Head of Law and Monitoring Officer, introduced the report and explained that the current procedures for investigating complaints is relatively new. The procedures have been recently reviewed by the previous Committee and minor amendments were made.

Kath Nicholson went through the procedures and explained that normally notice will be given to the member complained about. It was also explained that confidentiality, if requested, will be respected, however this cannot be guaranteed.

It was explained that for less serious allegations and where the parties agree an informal resolution may be appropriate. However such informal resolution is not appropriate if the matter is serious.

Kath Nicholson further explained the 3 questions to be asked in making initial enquiries

and the criteria which informs her initial assessment.

It was further explained that each complaint is considered on a case by case basis. It was explained that where there were repeated or trivial complaints the Monitoring Officer would consider discussing the matter with the party Whip.

It was explained that in relation to sanctions there were much less powers than before and now included censure, withdrawal of access to Council facilities, report to full Council, publicity, training and organisational recommendations to the Council.

Members welcomed the presentation and generally agreed that the flexibility in the Council's procedures was a good feature. Members enquired whether there was a prescribed time line for investigations. The Head of Law explained that an investigation will normally be concluded within 6 weeks.

Members also enquired whether the views of persons who have been through the process have been sought. This has not previously been done however the Head of Law agreed to seek such views on the conclusion of future investigations.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

6 APPOINTMENT TO SUB COMMITTEES.

RESOLVED that Councillors Dacres, Adefiranye, Elliott, Klier and Johnston-Franklin and Gill Butler, Leslie Thomas QC and Matthew Hill be members of Standards Sub Committee A.

Councillors Morrison, Bernards, Hall, Hooks and Moore and Cathy Sullivan, David Roper – Newman and Hannah Le Vey be members

of Standards Sub Committee B.

The proposed Terms of Reference to Standards Sub Committees A and B be agreed save for the amendment to the Terms of Reference to include “To meet the principles of fairness and natural justice” at the end of paragraph 4.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11th December 2014

The meeting ended at 8:10pm