

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Wednesday 18 July 2018 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Obajimi Adefiranye (Chair), Peter Bernards, Bill Brown, Colin Elliott, Alex Feis-Bryce, Caroline Kalu and Hilary Moore.

Also Present Fasil Bhatti, Cathy Sullivan and David Roper-Newman.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Andre Bourne, Jim Mallory and Joan Millbank and Independent Members: Gill Butler, Leslie Thomas QC and Joy Walton.

1. Declaration of interests

No declarations were made.

2. Standards Committee Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on October 17 2017 and May 23 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. Introduction and Role of the Committee

All members of the Committee and officers present introduced themselves to-the members of the Committee.

The Head of Law made a presentation to the committee on “The Role of The Standards Committee.”

During the course of the presentation members of the Committee raised various questions and made enquiry about the possibility of further training. If members have particular needs for training the Head of Law agreed to arrange it.

RESOLVED that the presentation by the Head of Law be noted.

4. Annual Complaints Report 2016-17

The Head of Public Services presented the report which provided performance information for 2016/17 on complaints dealt with by the Council and its housing partners at Stages 1 and 2 of the Corporate Complaints procedure and complaints and enquiries to the Mayor, Councillors and MPs logged on the Council’s complaints management system during 2016/17.

The report and presentation did not include complaints or enquiries in relation to adult and children’s social care both of which are reported individually and publicised according to statutory guidance.

The Independent Adjudicators report and the Local Government Ombudsman report were also considered.

The report included a breakdown of complaints and enquiries on a ward basis.

It was explained that the casework review had been implemented in 2016/17 and had resulted in a new corporate complaints and casework team. There had been a big increase in complaints, up by 33%, and the scale of the Council's savings as a result of the government's programme of austerity was a significant reason for the increase.

It was observed that Customer Services appear to be doing something right and it was suggested that there may be lessons to be learnt from that team.

It was also suggested that there may be some merit in adopting the Local Government Ombudsman's definition of complaints and this may assist in reducing the number of complaints.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. Review of Local Code of Corporate Governance

Paul Aladenika, Principal Policy Officer, introduced the report and explained that this is a standard report presented to the Standards Committee annually. This year's report has been revised to take on board the previous comments of the Standards Committee for the report to be formatted differently.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6. Work Programme

The Head of Law presented the item and invited the Committee to comment.

RESOLVED that the work programme shown in paragraph 3.3 be agreed.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22nd November 2018

The meeting ended at 7:15 pm