

Reminder: Members must declare all relevant pecuniary and/or pecuniary interests relating to any items of business to be discussed at this meeting

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, 7 February 2018 at 1400 hours in Committee Room 2,
Council House, Birmingham**

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

Attached

2 MINUTES

To agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2017.

3 MEMBER TRAINING

Matt Lewin, Cornerstone Barristers.

4 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items of business by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) that in the opinion of the Chairman are matters of urgency.

5 AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

Chairman to move:-

‘In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee’.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE 12 DECEMBER 2017

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2017 AT 1500 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

PRESENT: - Mr Steven Jonas in the Chair;

Councillors Deirdre Alden, Mahmood Hussain, Shafique Shah,
Mike Sharpe and Paul Tilsley.

APOLOGIES

253 Apologies were received from Mr Peter Wiseman, Mr Philip Richardson,
Frankley Parish Councillor Ian Bruckshaw, Sutton Coldfield Parish Councillor
Derrick Griffin and Raymond Tomkinson (Independent Observer).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

254 No interests were declared.

FORMAL INVESTIGATION - UPDATE

The City Solicitor/Monitoring Officer advised that 2 cases were under investigation currently. With regard to one complaint that was under investigation, the Councillor had spoken with the Chair of the Standards Committee and had taken advice from solicitors, with an appropriate resolution of the case being sought. In view of the involvement of external solicitors, the investigation had been out-sourced to an independent investigator and the timescale had needed to be extended. The City Solicitor/Monitoring Officer proposed that the Committee met in early January 2018 and a report be given to that meeting on how the case might progress. There was concern that the outstanding cases should be resolved before the 2018 election period.

Members were advised that complaints against Sutton Coldfield Town Councillors were referred to the City Council's Monitoring Officer. A training session with those Councillors had been arranged by officers for the end of January 2018. It was agreed that the Councillors' Political Party be shown on future reports.

Reference was made to a complaint submitted in July 2017 and Members were advised that it was subject also to an internal Party review.

It was noted that officers intended to bring regular reports to the Committee, showing investigations that were ongoing. Members were advised that there were no cases currently involving frequent complaints.

255 **RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

COMPLAINTS (2017-2018) - UPDATE

256 a) **Review of Councillors' Code of Conduct**

A copy of the current code of conduct was tabled for Members' information. Members were invited to comment on the code and suggest changes, with a view to incorporating changes agreed into the changes to Constitution to be submitted to the City Council's Annual Meeting in May 2018.

Officers had considered good practices in other authorities' codes of conduct and felt that some of those practices could be incorporated within the City Council's code. Two areas related to Councillors responsibilities when appointed to outside bodies and providing greater understanding of matters relating to complaints.

Members were asked to submit comments to the City Solicitor/Monitoring Officer by January 2018.

257 b) **Confirm Schedule of Meetings for 2018-2019**

The City Solicitor/Monitoring Officer apologised for cancellations to meetings in 2017 because of her availability or the availability of the Chair. She proposed to arrange 5 meetings of the Committee in 2018-2019 and advised that the Vice-Chair or the Assistant City Solicitor would deputise whenever necessary. Extra meetings could be arranged, when required, and she proposed that a meeting in January 2018 be arranged. It was agreed that meetings be held at 1400 hours in future on Wednesdays, or on Tuesdays if an alternative day was needed.

c) **Record of Chair's Actions Taken With Chief Officers Between Meetings**

In response to questions from Members, the City Solicitor/Monitoring Officer advised that the Chair was consulted on any matters arising from the schedule of complaints and on dispensations relating to declarations of Union membership. He had been consulted twice regarding dispensations in 2017.

258

RESOLVED:-

That a report be submitted to future meetings on actions taken by the Chair with the relevant Chief Officer between meetings.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

259

RESOLVED:-

‘In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee’.

The meeting ended at 15:50 hrs

CHAIRMAN