

# BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE 25 OCTOBER 2021</b>
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## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2021 AT 1400 HOURS IN JOHN PEEK ROOM, BIRMINGHAM MIDLAND INSTITUTE, MARGARET STREET, BIRMINGHAM**

**PRESENT:** - Mr Peter Wiseman in the Chair;

Councillor Deirdre Alden, Stephen Atkinson, Alastair Cowan,  
Councillor Peter Fowler, Mohammed Khan, Councillor Carl Rice  
and Councillor Paul Tilsley.

**ALSO PRESENT:** -

Raymond Tomkinson, Independent Person  
Rob Connelly, Assistant Director - Governance  
Satinder Sahota, Assistant Director – Legal  
Dawanna Campbell, Acting Assistant Practice Manager

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 1 Members were reminded that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and non pecuniary interests relating to any items of business to be discussed at this meeting. If a pecuniary interest was declared a Member must not speak or take part in that agenda item. Any declarations would be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

No interests were declared.

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### **APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE**

It was placed on record the contribution that the late Councillor Neil Eustace made to the Committee.

- 2 **RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the resolution of the City Council appointing the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/2022, with the following Members, be noted:

Labour

## **Standards Committee – 25 October 2021**

Councillor Julie Johnson -White  
Councillor Carl Rice

Conservative

Councillor Deirdre Alden  
Councillor Peter Fowler

Liberal Democrat

Councillor Paul Tilsley  
One vacancy

6 Independent lay members:

Stephen Atkinson  
Alastair Cowan  
Mohammed Khan  
Peter Wiseman (Chair)  
Steven Jonas  
Professor Stephen Shute

1 member representing the New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council  
and 1 member representing the Sutton Coldfield Parish Council  
(Parish member must be present when matters relating to the Parish  
Council or its Members are being considered):

New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Councillor Cllr Ian Bruckshaw  
Sutton Coldfield Parish Councillor Cllr Derrick Griffin

- (ii) That Steven Jonas be appointed the Vice Chair of the committee for the  
municipal year 2021/2022.

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### **APOLOGIES**

- 3 Apologies were received from New Frankley Parish Councillor Ian Bruckshaw,  
Sutton Coldfield Parish Councillor Derrick Griffin and Councillor Julie Johnson -  
White.

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### **MINUTES**

- 4 Members felt the Minutes of the 5 May 2021 were incomplete as a sentence  
had not been finished and a vote had not been recorded. It was agreed that the  
Minutes be reviewed by officers.

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### **TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The following Terms of Reference were submitted:-

(See document No 1)

It was noted that in the future the Committee's Terms of Reference would have to be reviewed.

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**RESOLVED:-**

That the Terms of Reference of the Committee be noted.

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**LESSONS TO LEARN AND FUTURE OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The following report of the Assistant Director of Governance was submitted:-

(See document No 2)

The Assistant Director of Governance made introductory comments relating to the report and responded to Members questions.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:-

- Members needed to think how they acted.
- There should be transparency in decision making.
- There should be Member training which should include, amongst other things, use of social media and how to and when to complete the Declaration of Interest Form and be for old and new Members.
- Whilst training could not be mandatory consideration should be given to how it could be enforced by for example holding back remuneration.
- Training for Cabinet Members should also be given to the Shadow Cabinet who could find themselves forming a Cabinet.
- The role that the Acting Chief Executive played in the issue should be considered as it was apparent that she was aware of the actions being undertaken by the then Leader. The need for a proper audit trail was noted. When the then Leader had meetings the appropriate support officers should have attended with him.
- It was noted that the then Leader had taken on the role with little experience in other roles such as chairing a Committee.
- Mention was made of Councillors' safety in light of the murder of David Amess MP at his constituency surgery although it was acknowledged that MPs had a higher profile. Officers were requested to look at Councillor security.

- The induction for new Councillors should be reviewed by officers and the outcome of such a review should be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

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**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That it be noted that the issues around governance are relevant matters for the Standards Committee to consider and, therefore, it is agreed that:
  - The governance aspects of members' induction training and on-going training for members is reviewed and enhanced
  - There is an urgent review of the resources (finance and people) allocated to Member development, with a view to an appropriate increase to enable early and robust development and delivery of the Member training programme which is in progress and a report be brought back to the next Committee meeting.
  - This training plan is submitted to the Committee for endorsement
  - A quarterly plan is prepared for the committee setting out what has been delivered for members and who has, and has not, attended. This to be a public document.
  - The suggestions set out in 5.23 of the report, regarding Declarations of Interest, Member/Officer relations and Chief Executive/Leader, be endorsed for implementation.
- (ii) In the light of the lessons learnt from this matter, the following areas of training and development should be included for all members:
  - Executive and non-executive decision making, roles and responsibilities
  - Confidentiality and decision making
  - particular requirements of being a Cabinet Member
- (iii) Consideration be given as to what training (if any) is mandatory and if so how would that would be enforced and it be noted that any requirements, for example, for training to be undertaken prior to a Member taking up a role either in the Executive or on a Committee would lack legal enforceability and would, therefore, require the support of the political groups.

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**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair was of the opinion that the following matter could be considered as a matter of urgency in view of need to expedite consideration thereof and instruct officer if necessary:-

**A. Dawanna Campbell, Acting Assistant Practice Manager**

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The Assistant Director of Governance indicated that Dawanna would be undertaking standards work.

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**B. Reviews**

- 8 The Assistant Director of Governance indicated that he would circulate the reviews.
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**C. Date of Next meetings**

- 9 The Assistant Director of Governance indicated that it was the intention to hold meetings of the Committee at the end of November, end of January 2022 and in March before the start of purdah.
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**AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

- 8 **RESOLVED:** -

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

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**EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

- 10 **RESOLVED:**

That in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, which includes exempt information of the category indicated, the public be now excluded from the meeting: -

(Paragraph 1 )

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