

# Public Document Pack

Standards Committee

21 April 2021

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE,  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST APRIL, 2021 AT 10.00 AM  
IN THE MEETING TO BE HELD PURSUANT TO STATUTORY INSTRUMENT  
2020/392. LINK TO LIVE STREAM WILL BE FOUND AT  
[HTTPS://WWW.TENDRINGDC.GOV.UK/LIVEMEETINGS](https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/livemeetings)**

<b>Present:</b>	Councillors Land (Chairman), Steady (Vice-Chairman), Fowler, J Henderson, Turner and Wiggins
<b>Also Present:</b>	Sue Gallone (Independent Person), Clarissa Gosling (Independent Person), David Irvine (Independent Person) and Jane Watts (Independent Person)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Lisa Hastings (Assistant Director (Governance) & Monitoring Officer), Linda Trembath (Senior Solicitor (Litigation and Governance) & Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Debbie Bunce (Legal and Governance Administration Officer)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Sue Honeywood, with no substitute on this occasion.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was moved by Councillor Land, seconded by Councillor Turner and:-

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Wednesday 3 February 2021 be approved as a correct record.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none on this occasion.

**4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38**

There were none on this occasion.

**5. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER - A.1 - MANDATORY TRAINING FOR MEMBERS - ANNUAL UPDATE**

There was submitted a report (A.1) by the Monitoring Officer which sought to update the Committee, as part of its agreed work programme, on the current position of mandatory training for Members and named substitute Members of the Council's Audit, Licensing & Registration, Planning and Standards Committees.

The report reiterated the Council's decision and constitutional requirement to make relevant training mandatory for Members, and their named substitutes, in respect of their membership on those committees which provided regulatory type functions. The report also detailed training undertaken and attendance to date.

Appendix A to the report provided details of those Members who had attended Licensing Refresher Training in October 2020

Members were made aware that members of the Planning Committee had been invited to a session on Section 1 of the Local Plan following receipt of the Planning Inspector's letter confirming soundness.

It was reported that one Member also received training for the Planning Committee during 2020.

It was also reported that a Member Training Session on Planning Appeals had been held on 20 April 2021, where with the exception of one member, the Planning Committee members all attended together with a number of other interested members.

It was noted that due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic Members had received training to enable them to continue conducting Committee meetings remotely using Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams and there had also been regular All Member Briefings throughout the year.

The mandatory training referenced in this report also formed part of the overall training provision for all Councillors within the framework established by the Council's "Councillor Development Statement" as reported to this Committee on 2 October 2019 (Minute 14 referred). It was clear that the development of that overall training provision as envisaged in the Statement had been adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, other training had been enhanced to address, for instance, use of IT for remote meetings and undertaking scrutiny in a remote meeting setting.

In relation to the general position on training for Councillors, Council on 16 March 2021 had endorsed the following as part of its consideration of the report of the Monitoring Officer on the outcome of the latest review of the Constitution:

*"that the views and wishes expressed by the Review of the Constitution Portfolio Holder Working Party in relation to Members' training and development be endorsed and that the Head of Democratic Services & Elections be requested to take all necessary action to implement those wishes as soon as possible."*

The specific views expressed by the Review of the Constitution Portfolio Holder Working Party, included:

*"There was support from Members for E-learning and a webinar based approach especially an E-learning modular approach whereby participants had to answer Questions to a high enough success rate in order to be deemed to have sufficient knowledge of that topic and be Passed;*

*Essex County Council be put forward as an approach to emulate; and*

*Officers investigate a suitable mechanism for regular Member input going forward such as a cross-party Member Working Group."*

It was intended to take the above forward following the elections on 6 May 2021 in view of restricted capacity among Officers and Councillors prior to that.

Members asked questions of the Monitoring Officer specifically in relation to the continuation of remote meetings and the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the legislation that allowed remote meetings to take place during the COVID-19 Pandemic was due to end on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and that the Government had not renewed the legislation. This would mean that after that date meetings would have to be held in person.

The suggestion of the Constitution Review Working Party to have regular Member input in the form of a cross-party Member Working Group in relation to E-Learning was discussed and Councillor Turner expressed a willingness to be the Committee's representative on such Working Group. All the Members of the Committee agreed with the suggestion.

It was moved by Councillor Land, seconded by Councillor Steady and:-

**RESOLVED** that the Committee -

- (a) notes the contents of the report and its Appendix;
- (b) continues to encourage Members of the Planning, Licensing and Registration and Audit Committees to attend organised mandatory training events in order to comply with the requirements of the Council's Constitution and;
- (c) To appoint a member of the Standards Committee on the Cross-Party Member Working Party and at the current time the representative would be Councillor Turner.

**6. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER - A.2 - ANNUAL REPORT ON DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

There was submitted a report (A.2) by the Monitoring Officer which provided the Committee with an overview on the register of, and declarations of, interests made by Members in the period 20 February 2019 to 31 March 2021. The report provided statistics and related information on –

- 1) the Register of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests;
- 2) the number of declarations of interest made at meetings;
- 3) the use of blank dispensations; and
- 4) the number of offers of gifts and hospitality that had been registered by Members during this period.

Having considered the information submitted the Committee noted the contents of the report.

**7. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22**

The Committee gave consideration to its work programme for the 2021/2022 Municipal Year.

Members had before them a suggested work programme which had been submitted by the Monitoring Officer.

It was moved by Councillor Henderson and seconded by Councillor Turner and:–

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Work Programme for 2021/2022 be approved.

#### 8. **QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS UPDATE**

The Monitoring Officer circulated to the Committee the quarterly schedule, which gave an update on existing cases together with general details of new cases, without providing any names, and went through them with the Committee. There had been no requests for dispensations from Members.

DISTRICT	TDC CLLR	Closed	No further action	IP consulted – related to behaviour in a remote meeting	
PARISH (X3)	PUBLIC	Closed	No further action	Related to alleged failure to declare interests at a very difficult meeting. All Councillors apologised for the oversight and MO has offered to provide training to the Parish Council.	
DISTRICT	MO	With investigator	Pending	Deputy MO is dealing with the case due to conflict. Case has been referred for investigation.	
<b>New Cases since last update:</b>					
<b>Council</b>	<b>Complain ant</b>	<b>Current status</b>		<b>Final outcome</b>	<b>Comments</b>
DISTRICT	MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC	CLOSED		No further action	Complaint was historical (over a year old) and refers to matters relating to a council decision and separate legal proceedings .

TOWN	TOWN COUNCIL LORS (x3)	With MO to go to Cllr subject member of the complaint to respond to.	Pending	Behaviour complained of refers to bullying.
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The Committee noted the foregoing.

The meeting was declared closed at 10.34 am

**Chairman**

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