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Standards Committee

15 March 2023

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE,
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH MARCH, 2023 AT 10.00 AM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, AT THE TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-
ON-SEA, CO15 1SE**

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Present: | Councillors Land (Chairman), Steady (Vice-Chairman), Casey, V E Guglielmi and J Henderson |
| Also Present: | Councillor I J Henderson |
| In Attendance: | Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager), Karen Townshend (Executive Projects Manager (Governance)) and Keith Durran (Committee Services Officer) |

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Gina Placey and Mick Skeels and Sue Gallone (one of the Council's Independent Persons).

25. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 8 February 2023 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members at this time.

27. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

No Questions on Notice had been submitted by Members pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38 on this occasion.

28. DRAFT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN FOR 2023/2024

The Committee considered the following draft Work Plan for 2023/2024:-

19th July 2023 (provisional date)

- Introduction to the Standards Framework and Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee
- Update on Member Induction and Code of Conduct training
- Review of the Planning Probity Protocol
- Regular Complaints update by Monitoring Officer

11th October 2023 (provisional date)

- Update on Mandatory Training for Members
- Review of the Independent Person joint working arrangements and recruitment preparations for 2024
- Town and Parish Councils Code of Conduct and Interests review
- Regular Complaints update by Monitoring Officer

7th February 2024 (provisional date)

- Case review and guidance update for the Committee on decisions and actions taken nationally
- Regular Complaints update by Monitoring Officer

24th April 2024 (provisional date)

- Update on Mandatory Training for Members
- Annual Report on declarations of interest (meetings, gifts and hospitality)
- Regular Complaints update by Monitoring Officer

Members were made aware that the above meeting dates were provisional pending ratification at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 23 May 2023 and that, in addition, individual matters might be referred to those meetings by the Monitoring Officer, in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference as necessary, for example, an appeal against a dispensation decision or a Code of Conduct hearing.

The Executive Projects Manager (Governance) was pleased to inform the Committee that, further to decisions made by Full Council at their meetings held in November 2022 and March 2023, all four Independent Persons (IPs) had now confirmed to the Monitoring Officer their willingness to continue in their joint roles as IPs and also as members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Having duly considered and discussed the contents of the draft work plan:-

It was moved by Councillor V E Guglielmi, seconded by Councillor J Henderson and:-

RESOLVED that the Work Plan for the Standards Committee for 2023/2024 be approved and adopted.

29. NEW MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Committee received from the Council's Head of Democratic Services & Elections (Keith Simmons) a presentation on the new Member Induction Programme for the Councillors who would be duly elected at the District Council elections to be held on Thursday 4 May 2023.

That presentation covered the following matters:-

- (a) The elements of Induction;
- (b) Envisaged Meetings –
- (i) Annual Council on 23 May 2023;
 - (ii) Planning Committee on 6 June 2023;
 - (iii) Licensing and Registration Committee (to be confirmed);
 - (iv) Cabinet on 23 June 2023; and
 - (v) Audit Committee on 29 June 2023.
- (c) What have we got already in place:
- (i) Signpost Booklet – A Guide for Elected Members of Tendring District Council;
 - (ii) Initial Letter to successful candidates at the Count (4/5 May);
 - (iii) Date for first ‘new’ Councillors event (11 May);
 - (iv) General Welcome Event for all Councillors (15 May);
 - (v) Dates for two Tours of the District (26 May and 8 June);
 - (vi) Date for Planning Mandatory Training (to be confirmed);
 - (vii) Date for Licensing Mandatory Training (8 June – evening);
 - (viii) Date of Audit Mandatory Training (to be confirmed);
 - (ix) Councillor Consultative Event on the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 (30 May);
 - (x) Cabinet Away Day (9 June);
 - (xi) Councillor Development Session throughout the year (21 June – first one);
 - (xii) Evaluation Sheets on Training Delivered; and
 - (xiii) LGA Online Training Resource.
- (d) What we are also planning:
- (i) Initial Training Needs Analysis for Members; and
 - (ii) Service based video resources.
- (e) Induction Plan Word Cloud.

The Committee noted the foregoing.

30. **QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS UPDATE AND OTHER GENERAL MATTERS**

The Committee had before it the Monitoring Officer’s quarterly schedule, which updated it on existing and new conduct complaint cases, along with other general matters.

| TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL MONITORING OFFICER UPDATE MARCH 2023 | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Council | Complainant | Current status | Final outcome | Comments |
| Existing Cases from last update: | | | | |
| Council | Complainant | Current status | Final outcome | Comments |
| PARISH | PARISH COUNCILLOR | ONGOING | Informal resolution recommended | Complaint and response received and reviewed by |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------|---|--|
| | | | | Independent Person. No response received so far to suggestion of informal resolution. |
| PARISH | PARISH COUNCILLOR | ONGOING | Informal resolution recommended | Complaint and response reviewed by Independent Person. Matter received relating to the aforementioned Parish Council complaint. To run in parallel with the initial complaint. Currently informal resolution not accepted by both parties. |
| PARISH | PARISH COUNCILLOR | CLOSED | No further action – other than recommended to reflect upon actions. MO offered to attend meetings to observe. | Matter related to behaviour within Parish Council meetings and electronic correspondence. Complaint resulted from a series of actions, by both parties and could have been dealt with differently. |
| New Cases since last update | | | | |
| DISTRICT | PUBLIC | ONGOING | | Matter related to alleged conduct whilst acting in an official capacity. |
| DISTRICT | DISTRICT COUNCILLOR | ONGOING | | Matter related to not disclosing a pecuniary interest. |
| DISTRICT | DISTRICT COUNCILLOR | ONGOING | | Matter related to alleged disclosure of |

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|--|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| | | | | confidential information. |
| <u>General Notes – 2022/23 Summary:</u> | | | | |
| <p>Overall, 10 cases had been received in 2022/23. The Monitoring Officer would be delivering training to one Parish Councillor on the DPI requirements and a date for that had now been confirmed.</p> <p>During the last month it had become evident that there was a need for refresher training of the impacts of declaring Personal Interests at meetings of the District Council. Guidance had been offered in emails however, if there was a longer period and more formal meetings before the District Elections, training would be organised.</p> <p>A case of non-declaration and registration of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest was being explored in the appropriate manner.</p> | | | | |
| <u>Requests for dispensations:</u> | | | | |
| There had not been any requests for dispensation. | | | | |

The Committee noted the foregoing.

The meeting was declared closed at 10.29 am

Chairman

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