

**MINUTES OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MEETING DATE** Thursday, 21 September 2017

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors Bill Evans (Chair), Carol Chisholm, Colin Coulton and Susan Jones

**OFFICERS:** Caroline Elwood (Interim Corporate Governance Manager), Dave Whelan (Legal Services Manager/Monitoring Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**OTHER MEMBERS AND OFFICERS:** David Haley (Independent Person) (Independent Person), Councillor Peter Mullineaux (Leader), Councillor Colin Clark (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets), Councillor Phil Smith (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Leisure), Councillor Warren Bennett, Councillor Caroline Moon, Councillor Paul Wharton and Councillor Keith Martin

**PUBLIC:** 0

**8 Appointment of Chair**

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, Councillor Bill Evans took the Chair for the meeting.

**9 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors David Bird (Chair), Linda Woollard (Vice Chair) and Mick Higgins submitted apologies.

**10 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 29 June 2017 be held as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

**11 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of any interests were declared.

**12 Minutes of the meetings of the Standards Committee Initial Assessment Hearing Panel**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Standards Committee Initial Assessment Hearing Panels held on 27 July and 30 August 2017 were held as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

### **13 Confidentiality Arrangements**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Monitoring Officer that updated members on developments relating to the improvement of the Council's confidentiality arrangements.

Following the leak of the Interim Wilkin Chapman report into Licensing, the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer had instructed Weightmans Solicitors to carry out an investigation into the circumstances relating to the leaking of the confidential report.

The concluding part of the report, advised six recommendations that needed to be addressed to ensure that the Council has a robust framework in place for dealing with confidential and personal information. Governance Committee had agreed the Action Plan at its meeting on 28 June with the aim of further developing and strengthening the Council's information management practice. Some progress had already been made against the actions.

Although delayed, the review of the whistleblowing policy was considered a key piece of work and the additional time would allow for a more fundamental review to take place before being considered by Governance Committee. Once completed, awareness of the policy would be paramount to its success.

It was reported that data protection training for members and officers as part of the annual training and development of plans would be delivered through use of MILO, an online training application. Whilst considered mandatory for officers, Members would be actively encouraged to complete the training by the Interim Monitoring Officer and group leaders.

Members also discussed how lessons learnt from the review of licensing and recent Standards Hearings could be embedded across the organisation.

A more in depth report detailing all progress made to date against the targets contained within the Action Plan would be reported back to future meetings of both Governance and Standards Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

### **14 Member Officer Protocol**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Corporate Governance Manager updating Member of progress made towards the development of a Member Officer Protocol.

The development of a suitable Protocol is included within the Council's draft Corporate Improvement Plan and following an audit by the CfPS, the Local Government Association (LGA) have indicated an intention to fund development work as part of its support of the Council.

Members were provided with the details of the successful tenderer, Mike Green from Transitional Space, an experienced facilitator with extensive Local Government experience. A timetable of activity was also presented that included:

- A series of Focus Groups with both Members and staff that would identify the challenges that currently exist;

- Delivery of five half day sessions to present the draft protocol and obtain feedback prior to the final version being brought back to the Committee and Governance Committee to recommend final sign off by full Council;
- Training and Guidance.

Members were pleased to note the work being undertaken to extend the current protocol and discussed how nominations for the Member Focus Groups would be sought to ensure that the views of all Members were taken into consideration.

In response to comments from the audience around obtaining timely information relating to planning and refuse matters from senior officers or Cabinet Members, the Interim Corporate Governance Officer indicated that there would be the opportunity to highlight these issues as part of the process for developing the protocol, although it was accepted that more specific protocols may be needed around planning.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Chair

Date