

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

10 March 2021

**Present** – Councillors Ireton (Chairman), Mercer, Metcalfe, Solloway and Whitaker.

**Independent Persons (non-voting):** Roger Millin and John Boumphrey.

**Parish Representative (non-voting):** Dan Balsamini and Robert Stead.

**Officers** – Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) and Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer.

Start: 6.35pm

Finish: 7.08pm

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 4 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

**Public Participation** – Councillor Eric Jaquin addressed the Committee and raised concerns regarding alleged electoral irregularities relating to the Skipton Town Council election which took place on 13 August 2020. The Chairman referred Councillor Jaquin to the Chief Executive (Returning Officer) and thanked him for raising the issue.

### **Minutes for Report**

STN.381

#### **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report which presented the draft revised Members' Code of Conduct. On 3 July 2019, the Committee agreed an action plan for implementing 15 best practice recommendations set out in the CSPL report and at the last meeting, the Committee received a progress report. Members were reminded that two of the best practice recommendations required amendments to the Members' Code of Conduct.

In accordance with CSPL recommendation one, Member obligation two in the Code had been amended. A new section had been added – 'Complying with the Code of Conduct', in line with recommendation two. The Monitoring Officer had taken the opportunity to carry out a light touch review of the Code, which was last reviewed by the Committee in December 2018. The Monitoring Officer proposed that a new member obligation was added to the Code requiring Members to promote equalities and not discriminate unlawfully against any person. Members were pleased to note that any reference to gender had also been removed to ensure the document was inclusive.

**Resolved** – That the revised Members' Code of Conduct is recommended to Council for adoption.

STN.382

### **OFFICERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report which invited Members to review and consider the current Officers' Code of Conduct to ensure it reflects best practice and remains fit for purpose.

Members were reminded of the extensive review undertaken by the Committee in 2015 which resulted in significant updates and the introduction of three corporate template forms. The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) contacted the Corporate and Senior Leadership teams and asked colleagues for any comments they may have on the current Code and the review. Members were pleased to hear that all of the comments were positive.

Members noted that the only planned update was to make the document gender neutral. It was emphasised by the Independent Persons that the Code seemed to be working well and any changes other than the planned update would be unnecessary.

**Resolved** – That the Officers' Code of Conduct is updated to be a gender neutral document.

STN.383

### **PARISH REPRESENTATIVES**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) presented a report which updated Members on the appointment of Parish Representatives. Subsequent to the lengthy debate at the last meeting, the Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) had written to all Parish and Town Councils in the District and invited them to submit nominations for Parish Representatives.

**Resolved** – That the contents of the report are noted.

STN.384

### **MONITORING REPORT**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report which updated Members on the Code of Conduct complaints received following the last report to Committee on 4 November 2020. Members noted the two ongoing complaints which continued to be externally investigated.

**Resolved** – That the Monitoring Report to date is noted.

STN.385

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman informed the Committee of the two Independent Persons and Parish Representative who had come to the end of their 4 terms on the Standards Committee. The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) confirmed she would speak to those concerned outside of the meeting.

**Resolved** – That the Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) contacts the relevant members.

*Chairman*