

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

6 November 2019

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

Parish Representatives (non-voting): Robert Stead.

Independent Persons (non-voting): Peter Charlesworth and Roger Millin.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Michael Rooze and John Boumphrey.

Start: 6.30pm

Finish: 7pm

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 3 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minutes for Report

STN.364 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE COUNCIL**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report which updated Members on complaints handled by the Council in the period of 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019.

Members noted the annual letter from the Ombudsman including the positive reduction of complaints and commented on the two upheld decisions. It was requested that details of the two upheld decisions be circulated to Members.

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) informed Members of an email received from a Parish Council Chair. The email addressed several concerns which included the lack of information in relation to service delivery levels at the Council and that there did not appear to be a system in place to record or monitor how long it takes for queries raised by the public to be fully dealt with.

Resolved – (1) That, the report contents including the reduction in complaints, improvements in procedure and cases handled by the Ombudsman's office are noted.
(2) That, the Committee made a recommendation for action with regards to an in-depth review of the complaints procedure and system.

STN.365 **ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS –
IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON
STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report which sought Members approval of the amended Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints document.

One Member suggested the omission of the word 'convenient' from section 9 of the Arrangements. Members also commented on the wording of section 7 of the Assessment Criteria which needed to be reviewed.

Resolved – (1) That, subject to the above amendments the revised Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints are approved.

STN.366 **MEMBER AND OFFICER PROTOCOL**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report which presented the Council's Member Officer Protocol in a view to commence a review to ensure the Protocol remained fit for purpose.

Members were reminded of the last extensive review of the Member Officer Protocol which was in 2015. Members took into account the current Protocol and suggestions from the Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) and agreed the need to update guidance, in particular, the procedure for contacting Officers and the addition of an email etiquette segment.

Resolved – (1) That, Members approved the consultation.

STN.367 **MONITORING REPORT**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report which updated Members following the last report to Committee on 3 July 2019.

Members were pleased to note that there were no complaints to report.

Resolved – (1) That the Monitoring Report to date is noted.

Minutes for decision

Chairman