

MEMBER CONDUCT COMMITTEE
17TH JUNE 2019

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Tassell)
The Vice Chair (Councillor Murphy)
Councillors Bentley, J. Bradshaw, Hadji-Nikolaou,
Hamilton and Rollings
Councillors Ball (Parish Member) and Marchant
(Parish Member)

Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer (NC)

APOLOGIES: none

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. She also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

3. QUESTIONS UNDER COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 12.8

No questions had been received.

4. UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Considered a report of the Monitoring Officer providing an update on complaints received about breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct and any issues arising from those complaints (item 5 on the agenda).

The Democratic Services Manager drew the Committee's attention to the outcome of the hearing on 27th February 2019 and that the former Borough Councillor David Hayes had not made a written apology to the Head of Planning and Regeneration as requested by the Panel.

RESOLVED

1. that the Committee take no further action in relation to former Borough Councillor David Hayes, who has not yet made a written apology to the Head of Planning and Regeneration as requested by the Panel;

2. that the current position in respect of complaints about breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct that have been received be noted.

Reasons

1. The Committee discussed the matter and concluded that the Panel had not achieved the outcome it wished and it was unlikely that the written apology would be forthcoming, therefore it was not in the public's interest for the Committee to chase this matter, using valuable officer and members' time;
2. To keep the Committee informed about complaints.

5. REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS BY THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

Considered a report of the Monitoring Officer regarding the results of the public consultation of the review of local government ethical standards by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL), (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Hadji-Nikolaou entered the meeting.

The Democratic Services Manager noted that the process for reviewing the Constitution would begin in August 2019.

RESOLVED

1. that the Committee note the results of the consultation and the recommendations by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) as summarised in the Appendix;
2. that the recommendations by CSPL be considered as part of the review of the Constitution scheduled for the Committee's meeting to be held on 2nd December 2019;
3. that a review of the recommendations by CSPL is added to the Work Programme and is scheduled once the Government has provided its response to the recommendations.

Reasons

1. To enable the Committee to understand the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
2. Members of the Committee considered that the recommendations made by CSPL could alter the Borough Council's Constitution, particularly in relation to the suspension of a councillor for upto six months, and wished to include the topic in its annual review of the Constitution at its meeting in December to enable changes to be made at the same time.

3. The Committee wished to monitor the situation in relation to the response by the Government to the recommendations by CSPL.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

Considered a report of the Monitoring Officer enabling the Committee to agree a work programme to plan its future business (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED

1. that the Committee's current work programme be noted and updated in accordance with the decisions taken during the consideration of this item and other items on the agenda;
2. that the Hearing Appeals Process be scheduled to the Committee's meeting on 2nd December 2019;
3. that if no further matters for discussion arise before the Committee's meeting scheduled to be held on 9th September 2019, that it be cancelled and the complaints statistics be circulated by email to the members of the Committee.

Reasons

1. To enable the Committee to fulfil its role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillor and co-opted members.
2. The Committee wished to consider matters relating to the Constitution together at one meeting so that amendments could be made at the same time in preparation for the annual review of the Constitution by Full Council.
3. To enable best use of officer and councillor time.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 2nd September 2019 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Member Conduct Committee.