

Standards Committee

Monday 27 January 2014 at 6.00 p.m.

at the Council House, Walsall

Present

Councillor Underhill (Chair)
Councillor Martin (Vice-Chair)
Councillor A. Andrew
Councillor Azam
Councillor Burley
Councillor Hussain
Councillor Murray
Councillor Phillips

In attendance

Dr. A. Sen (independent person)

37/14 Apology

An apology for non-attendance was submitted on behalf of Councillor Jeavons.

38/14 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2013 copies having been sent to each member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

39/14 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

40/14 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to be considered in private session.

41/14 **Code of Conduct for Employees**

The report of the Head of HR was submitted:

(see annexed)

The Head of HR, Mr. McGowan, drew attention to the main points contained within the document and confirmed that a copy was provided to new starters with the authority and was referred to during the induction process. All staff would be advised that they could access a copy of the Code via the intranet.

After discussion it was:

Resolved

That the revised Code of Conduct for Employees be agreed and adopted and that the Constitution be amended accordingly, subject to the following:

- Page 5, paragraph 1.0 – in the last sentence include “employees and managers should....”.
- That, in order to ensure that various aspects are drawn to the readers’ attention, the appropriate sections of the document be printed in bold print and itemised.
- With regard to hospitality, include “that if staff are in doubt they contact their manager”.
- In the hospitality section include examples.
- Where possible list items that could be acceptable.
- Insert being “courteous but where appropriate being firm”.

42/14 **Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) procedure**

A report was submitted:

(see annexed)

Members expressed concern at the level of confidentiality proposed in respect of the person submitting the complaint.

After consideration it was:

Resolved

That the revised Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) procedure be referred back to the next meeting of the Committee and that:

- (i) the recommendations relating to the inclusion in paragraph 2.2 of the procedure include “discrimination” and “community unrest”; and

- (ii) the section relating to anonymity be expanded to ensure that the person reporting would remain anonymous and would be identified by a reference number.

43/14 Review of the Constitution – Part 4 – Rules of procedure

A report was submitted:

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the amendments contained in the annexed report be approved for inclusion in the updated Constitution to be recommended to Council at its Annual Meeting in June 2014, subject to the following addition:

Part 4.1 – Council procedure rules 15.6(a) – Amendments to motion – after “each member present” insert “at the discretion of the person presiding”.

44/14 Enquiries from constituents/features of good decision-making

A report was circulated at the meeting:

(see annexed)

Mr. Cox, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services outlined the content of the report and informed members that he proposed to circulate guidance notes to all members of the Council in order to assist them in their role; he asked members for feedback on the document to enable it be presented to the next meeting.

Dr. Sen (independent person) requested that the information be included on the Council’s intranet site in order that members could gain easy access.

Resolved

That this item be included on the agenda for the next meeting to enable members to provide feedback on the document.

45/14 Protocol governing filming, audio recording and photography at Council meetings

A report was submitted:

(see annexed)

Mr. Cox, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services outlined the content of the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That the report be forwarded to group leaders, independent members and group rooms for information.

The meeting terminated at 7.35 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: