

## **Standards Committee**

**Wednesday 12 April, 2023 at 6.00pm.**

**In a Conference Room at the Council House, Walsall**

### **Members Present**

Councillor Kaur (Chair)  
Councillor Burley (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Allen  
Councillor Andrew  
Councillor Follows  
Councillor Lee  
Councillor Nazir  
Councillor Towe  
Councillor Young

### **Independent Persons Present**

Ms. D. Mardner  
Mr. A. Green

### **Officers Present**

Mr A. Cox - Director of Governance  
Ms S. Lloyd - Democratic Services Officer

#### **46/22 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr. C. Magness.

#### **47/22 Substitutions**

There were no substitutions.

#### **48/22 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **49/22 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items for consideration in private session.

## **50/22 Minutes of the previous meeting**

### **Resolved**

**That the minutes of the meetings held 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, a copy having been circulated in advance, be approved as a correct record.**

## **51/22 Review of Terms of Reference/Remit of Standards Committee**

The Director of Governance presented a report which outlined the outcome of the working party relating to the review of the terms of reference/remit of Standards Committee. It was noted that as part of this review the working party had considered the number of meetings of the Committee and found this to be in line with other local authorities and they also re-iterated their belief that Standards should remain a standalone Committee rather than it being amalgamated with Audit as was the case in some other authorities to ensure that it was given the importance that it was due.

The Director of Governance highlighted the main changes proposed to the remit of the Committee including the explicit inclusion of behaviour and culture and strategic oversight of councillor training. Following questions from Members of the Committee the Director of Governance confirmed that this information could be included in the member induction pack and that it was hoped that the groups would be play a more proactive role in encouraging member training in the future.

### **Resolved**

#### **That:**

- 1. The report be noted;**
- 2. Recommendations be made in relation to the remit of Standards Committee to be discussed with the group leaders prior to being submitted to full Council; and**
- 3. The Committee's thanks be given to the working party for the work it has done in reviewing the terms of reference/remit of the Standards Committee.**

## **52/22 Councillors' Training**

The Committee received a report in relation to training available to Councillors. It was highlighted that it was hoped that training champions within the political groups would be able to encourage and support other councillors to complete such learning and development that was necessary or beneficial. The Director of Governance also stated that he would hold focus groups with members to ask them what training they would find beneficial to identify any gaps that there may be in the current programme.

Following questions from the Committee the Director of Governance confirmed that records were kept of training that had been completed and it was possible for councillors to submit details of relevant training that had been completed in other areas, for example in their professions or through voluntary roles. He undertook to return to the next meeting of the Standards Committee with further details on the training budget and the monitoring of the minimum 12 hours of training for Councillors per municipal year.

### **Resolved**

#### **That:**

- 1. The report be noted; and**
- 2. Details regarding current training programme to be provided at the next meeting of the Standards Committee.**

### **53/22 Parental Leave for Councillors**

The Director of Governance presented the outcomes of the working party created to consider a policy for parental leave for councillors. He advised that the working party had considered similar policies from other local authorities and had created a draft policy for consideration which would need to be formally approved by full Council in order to be implemented.

A discussion was held in relation to whether it was appropriate to give elected members discretion as to whether they wished to continue monitoring emails and completing casework whilst on parental leave. It was felt by members of the Committee that this was a decision to be taken on a case-by-case basis together with ward colleagues and members of the political group as there was an important distinction between employees of the council and elected members.

### **Resolved**

#### **That:**

- 1. The report be noted;**

2. **Recommendations in relation to Parental Leave for Councillors to be discussed with the group leaders prior to being submitted to full Council; and**
3. **The Committee's thanks be given to the working party for the work it has done in relation to parental leave for councillors.**

**54/22 Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be decided at Annual Council.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.50pm.

Chair .....

Date .....