

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Standards Committee held in the Wantsum Room - Sessions House on Tuesday, 30 October 2018.

PRESENT: Mr R H Bird, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Mr G Lymer, Mr J P McInroy and Mr C Simkins

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Ms D Fitch (Democratic Services Manager (Council)) and Mr T Godfrey (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chairman

(Item 2)

(1) Mr McInroy proposed and Mr Simkins seconded that Mr Kite be elected Chairman of the Committee.

(2) RESOLVED that Mr Kite be elected Chairman of the Standards Committee.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

(Item 3)

(1) Mr Lymer proposed and Mr McInroy seconded that Mr Bird be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

(2) RESOLVED that Mr Bird be elected Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee.

3. Declarations of Interest

(Item 4)

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2015

(Item 5)

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2015 were taken as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Monitoring Officer's update

(Item 6)

(1) Mr Watts introduced his update and reminded Members that although there had not been a meeting of the Committee since the 2017 Election, business relating to the ethical framework and other Member issues had been considered by the Governance and Audit Committee and the Scrutiny Committee, as appropriate,

during this period. It was the intention to ensure that the Standards Committee met on a regular basis.

(2) Mr Watts referred to Appendix D which listed the complaints against Members and the outcomes. There had been an increase in the number of complaints made against Members during the current year compared to previous years and an increasing number of these related to the use of social media. To assist in addressing this issue, Member social media training had been offered to all Members. He confirmed that there had not been any complaints against Members in the past 2 years which had resulted in an investigation and referral to a Hearing Panel. He answered questions of clarification on the complaints process. Members considered the format and frequency of this information.

(3) Mr Godfrey outlined the context and outcome of the recently published Independent Inquiry Report by Dame Laura Cox DBE (The Cox Report) - *The Bullying and Harassment of House of Commons Staff*. Members agreed that they would find it helpful for Members of the Committee to be kept aware of this and similar reports and for this information to be circulated outside of the meeting.

(4) The Committee confirmed that they did not wish to receive updates on Code of Conduct and other related training for Members as this was now incorporated within the recently approved Member Development Plan and would therefore be monitored as part of that Plan.

(5) RESOLVED that

- (a) the report of the Monitoring Officer be noted.
- (b) the Committee receive an unrestricted update on complaints against Members at their meetings and this be in the form of an anonymised table referring to categories of complaint.
- (c) meetings of this Committee be held twice a year, in late May/early June and December/January.
- (d) the Standards Committee–Sub Committee (Hearing Panel) be appointed with the three voting Members being Mrs Allen, Mr Bird and Mr Kite.