

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 2 December 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Patel (Chair); Councillor Oldham (Deputy Chair); Councillors Bottwood, Marriott and Russell, Parish Councillor Hook (Co Optee) and Parish Councillor Lewis (Co Optee)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ika Castka, Co-Optee (Independent) and Councillor Brian Oldham (Deputy Chair).

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2019 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. RECRUITMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER CO OPTEE TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chair advised that the Standards Working Group, as the interview panel, had met recently and interviewed Candidate A. The Standards Working Group recommended to the Standards Committee that Candidate A is appointed as Co Optee (Independent) from 1 January 2020. Applicant A, Robert Mehaffy had verbally accepted the appointment subject to the approval of the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED: That:

(1) Robert Mehaffy is offered the role of Independent Member Co-Optee to the Standards Committee from 1 January 2020.

6. TRAINING STRATEGY

The Standards Committee received the Training Strategy 2019/2020 and the Chair invited comment. The Committee was advised that there was a need for the Strategy to have a covering report page that detailed the date of adoption, the version, and by whom approved the document.

RESOLVED: Subject to the inclusion of a covering report page, the Training Strategy 2019/2020 was approved.

7. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Standards Committee received the Communications Strategy 2019/2020 and the Chair invited comment. The Committee was advised that there was a need for the Strategy to

have a covering report page that detailed the date of adoption, the version, and by whom approved the document.

RESOLVED: Subject to the inclusion of a covering report page, the Communications Strategy 2019/2020 was approved.

8. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Standards Committee was referred to the report that detailed the effectiveness of the Council's Whistleblowing arrangements. The salient points were highlighted.

The Standards Committee asked questions, made comment and heard:

- In response to a query whether benchmarking had been undertaken, it was confirmed that it had not been but this was an exercise that could be undertaken.
- A Stress Working Group is being set up, and it will encompass the Whistleblowing Policy.

RESOLVED: That the information provided in relation to the effectiveness of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures is noted.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT ARRANGEMENTS COMPLAINTS

The Standards Committee received a report detailing statistics in relation to Code of Conduct Arrangements complaints.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer apprised the Committee of each of the complaints listed.

One of the complaints referred to a reconvened meeting of a Standard Hearing and the potential date, February 2020, was provided to the Members.

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) The statistical data in relation to the number of complaints received and dealt with is noted.
- (2) Statistical data in relation to the number of complaints received and dealt with is presented to the Committee at each meeting.

10. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 5:09 pm