



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE Monday 21 March 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Dixon (Chair), Kabir (Vice-Chair) and Sheila Darr, Councillors Collier, McLeish

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Krupa Sheth and Warren

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members discussed the minutes of the previous meeting and in particular an email sent to members of the committee following publication of the draft minutes seeking further details of the committee's discussion at its previous meeting and encouraging members to make amendments.

On advice from Fiona Alderman, Chief Legal Officer, Members agreed that the purpose of the committee's minutes is to record the key issues arising and the outcome and for the minutes to accurately reflect in general and summary form the committee's discussion.

The minutes were not intended to be a verbatim record of the meeting.

Looqman Desai, Solicitor, suggested that minute 5 be amended so that the reference to "Councillor Warren enquired about the Council's existing arrangements" be replaced with "Councillor Warren commented on the involvement of the Independent Person". This suggestion was agreed.

RESOLVED:-

Subject to the above amendment, that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 January 2016 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising (if any)

None.

4. Members' Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure and Independent Members

Fiona Alderman, Chief Legal Officer, introduced the item and provided a general overview.

Looqman Desai, Solicitor, outlined the key stages of the complaints procedure.

Councillor Kabir suggested that complaints and outcomes be reported to the committee on a 6 monthly basis instead of annually. The committee agreed.

Councillor Collier inquired whether the assessment criteria were clear and said it was important that the Monitoring Officer gave reasons for not taking any further action. Members were informed that the assessment criteria were clearly set out in the complaints procedure which once approved would be made available on the council's website. Members were also informed that the assessment criteria would be referred to in the council's complaint form which would act as a reminder to complainants and that reasons would be given for the decisions taken by the Monitoring Officer in the formative stages of the procedure.

Members were advised that the complaints procedure needed finalising i.e. links inserted, addresses included and minor drafting amendments would need to be made.

RESOLVED:-

Members therefore agreed the following change to recommendation 2.1:

That the Committee approves the Members' Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure attached to the report and authorises the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the document from time to time.

That the Committee recommends to Full Council that two additional Independent Members be appointed to the Committee.

Members also discussed the proposal to appoint two additional independent members to the committee. Members were informed that the membership of the committee would continue to be subject to political balance rules and that in any event the independent members of the committee would not have voting rights.

Councillor Kabir enquired about training for any new members and FA confirmed that all co-opted members as well as councillors are invited to attend training sessions on the Members' Code of Conduct and standards generally.

Members agreed to recommend to Full Council that two additional independent members be appointed to the committee.

5. Date of Next Meeting

TBC.

6. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

L DIXON
Chair