

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Meeting: 5 July 2021

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Mr Stephen Clarke (Independent Member), Ms Julie Carter (Independent Member), Andrew Stewart (Independent Member), Councillors Malcolm Allan, Brian Bagnall, Anna Charles-Jones and Charlie Stewart.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED – That Mr Stephen Clarke be elected Chair of the Committee for the period until the next Annual Council Meeting.

Mr Stephen Clarke in the Chair

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED – That Ms Julie Carter be elected Vice Chair of the Committee for the period until the next Annual Council Meeting.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 18 February 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. URGENT DECISIONS

No urgent decisions were reported.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions were submitted.

7. ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS RELATING TO COUNCILLORS CONDUCT IN 2020/21

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which updated the Committee on complaints received about the conduct of Members during the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

The following comments were made/issues raised

- In response to the Chair's question regarding how far misconduct relating to social media was accidental or as a result of not understanding the standards that were required, the Committee was advised that it was unlikely to have been accidental and that individuals were aware of what they were doing. All Councillors should be aware of how to use their social media platforms responsibly.
- Members asked whether the seven complaints that had been received were all relating to different councillors and if they related to the same event. In response, the Committee was advised that all the complaints related to different Councillors and different events.
- In response to a Member question, the Committee was advised that the Monitoring Officer protocol states that some weight should be applied to the fact that the complaint is over six months old, however complainants are always asked if there is a reason why there has been such a delay.
- Members commented that it was extremely reassuring that there were so few complaints and that it was important that training in relation to the use of social media continued.
- Training on social media was due to take place in the Autumn but this was not mandatory.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. LGA NEW MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

The Strategic Head of Service and Monitoring Officer presented a verbal report which updated Members of the Committee on the latest version of the LGA New Model Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer gave a brief update of the situation and will provide details of the LGA New Model Code of Conduct to next meeting of standards committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.25 pm