

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Meeting: 24 June 2024
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Mr Stephen Clarke (Independent Member) (Chair) in the chair; Ms Julie Carter (Vice-Chair); Councillors Asa Caton, Anna Charles-Jones, Liz Crix, Dan Oliver, Paul Wright and Val Cottam (Independent Person).

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. ELECTION 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 September 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and Officers were invited to declare any interests which they may have had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

The following interest was declared:-

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Dan Oliver	Agenda item 8 'Register of Member's Interests – Treatment of Sensitive Interests' as a member whose address had been removed from the public register.

5. URGENT DECISIONS

No urgent decisions were reported.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions were submitted.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication relating to an individual as defined in Category 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, would not be fair and would be in breach of Data Protection principles, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 8 - 'Register of Member's Interests - Treatment of Sensitive Interests' in the eventuality it was necessary to discuss the information contained within the 'not for publication' appendix.

8. REGISTER OF MEMBER'S INTERESTS - TREATMENT OF SENSITIVE INTERESTS

The Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which set out the statutory scheme for recording member interests and invited the Committee to endorse the Monitoring Officer's approach under which councillors home addresses may be treated as sensitive interests.

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- In response to a Member question, Standards Committee was advised that the approach to these matters would be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- It was confirmed that if a Member requested that their home address be removed from the Register of Interest it would also be removed from the website.
- Members expressed their surprise that Members' home addresses were in the public domain.
- Members queried whether this would cause any issues in terms of eligibility of candidacy for councillors as one of the main qualifications is living within the Borough and would this be written into the register of interests? In response, the Committee was advised that members would still need to fill in the register of interests but this would then be redacted from view. This would have to be balanced for each individual Member. The Monitoring Officer advised that she would feedback to the Committee via email as to whether it would be possible to add some wording in to the register of interests which stated 'address in borough' or 'address in ward'.
- It was felt that it was in the public interest for people to know whether Members live within the Borough.
- The Committee was advised that if a Member moved house then the register of interests would need to be updated.

RESOLVED -That the report be noted and the Monitoring Officer's approach to sensitive interests be endorsed.

The meeting closed at 6.16 pm