

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 7th May 2019

Present: Julie Miller (Independent Member – Chair)
Councillor Ruth Groome
Councillor Cliff Moreton
Councillor Jonathan West
Stuart Kilpatrick (Independent Member)
Lloyd Landry (Independent Member)

Also Present: Mike Sawford (Independent Person)
Martin Hammond (Executive Director and Monitoring Officer)
Anne Ireson (Administrator)

18.STA.06 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Phil Carter (Independent Member).

18.STA.07 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee held on 8th October 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the addition of Councillor Moreton to the list of those present.

18.STA.08 MONITORING OFFICER

Martin Hammond informed the Committee that Helen Edwards had now left the authority. He had now been appointed as the Council's Monitoring Officer with Ola Oduwole appointed as Deputy Monitoring Officer and Interim Head of Democratic and Legal Services.

18.STA.09 CHANGES TO THE STANDARDS REGIME - COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE REPORT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS

A report was submitted which provided a summary of the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CfSPL) report on Local Government Ethical

Standards and proposed some actions that the Borough Council could take now in relation to its recommendations.

It was noted that some recommendations would require legislative change. Recommendation R2, in respect of candidates no longer being required to publicly disclose their home address, had already been implemented by the government.

During debate particular reference was made to the following recommendations:-

- BP1 and BP2 (Bullying and Harassment). Members agreed that this should be reinforced in the code of conduct pending the introduction of a new code of conduct for the unitary authority.
- R25 (Formal Induction Training). The view was expressed that all councillors should be trained together rather than in political groups.
- R11 (Legal indemnity). Members expressed concerns about costs, but were of the view that the Independent Person should not be left exposed to potential legal action without indemnity.
- R19 (Parish Council Clerk's Qualification). It was felt that it was hard to recruit clerks and it was more appropriate to say "working towards a qualification"

Members noted that induction training by political parties was supplemental to local authority training. The recommendation was intended to encourage political parties to back-up the need for members to be trained to carry out their role, and should help to persuade members to undertake their induction training. It was agreed that it should be mandatory for all newly-elected members to attend both induction training and other training throughout their term of office.

The Local Authority would need to fund legal indemnity costs. However this may require a change of legislation and the Monitoring Officer would seek advice in conjunction with other authorities in the County.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) in future, an annual report be submitted by the Monitoring Officer to the Standards Committee, summarising the number and profile of code of conduct complaints received and investigated in each financial year;
- (ii) in advance of a code of conduct being adopted by the new shadow council and subsequent unitary authority, recommendations BP1 and BP2 be implemented and the

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Council's Code of Conduct be made more specific in relation to bullying and harassment, requiring members to comply and co-operate with standards investigations.

- (iii) recommendation BP11 be not implemented; and
- (iv) the focus for implementing any further changes to the Code brought about by changes to legislation should be focused on the constitution of the shadow and future unitary authorities.

18.STA.10 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS 2018/19

An annual report on complaints dealt with by the Council's Monitoring Officer was circulated at the meeting and it was noted that there had been no complaints against Borough Councillors. The Monitoring Officer outlined initial inquiries received regarding Town and Parish Councillors that had either not been substantiated or had been rejected as complaints as they did not merit further investigation.

A more substantial complaint was currently being investigated by the Deputy Monitoring Officer and any outcome would be reported to the next meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee.

18.STA.11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee was 21st October 2019. However it was likely that a meeting would need to be held in the intervening period and it was therefore agreed that the next meeting take place at 7.00 pm on **29th July 2019.**

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.25 pm)

Signed
Chair

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