

Standards Committee

MINUTES of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday 8 March 2016 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room GO1A, Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Catherine Dale (Chair)
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE
Councillor Sarah King
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Bill Williams
Councillor Jon Hartley (reserve)

OFFICER SUPPORT: Doreen Forrester-Brown, Director of Law and Democracy
Michael Cleere, Civic Engagement Manager
Chidilim Agada, Principal Constitutional Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Hubber and Cleo Soanes, who were both absent on council business attending the meeting of planning sub-committee B.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The members present were confirmed as the voting members.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

The chair gave notice of the following additional paper circulated prior to the meeting:

- The closed report containing nominations for the third co-opted member of the standards (civic awards) sub-committee.

The chair also gave notice of the email she circulated the previous week to members of the committee advising of an inclusion of an agenda item for discussion at this meeting on possible guidance and training for members in social media and digital services.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the chair.

6. REVIEW OF THE COMPLAINTS MADE UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The director of law and democracy introduced the report.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

7. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBER ON THE STANDARDS (CIVIC AWARDS) SUB-COMMITTEE

The civic engagement manager introduced the report.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The committee considered the nominations put forward for a third co-opted member and agreed on a first and second choice.

Note: There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

READMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That Mr Emmanuel Kwakye be appointed as the third co-opted member of the Standards (Civic Awards) Sub-committee.

8. REPORT ON THE OPERATIONAL USE OF THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000

The director of law and democracy introduced the report and advised that the investigation into case reference EN71 (Appendix A to the report), had not yet been concluded.

RESOLVED:

That the information contained in the report on the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 for the period from 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2015 (see Appendix A to the report) and 1 April 2010 to 30 September 2015 (see Appendix B to the report) be noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND

ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT

9. GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR MEMBERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL SERVICES

The chair informed the committee that she had added this item on the agenda as the council is increasingly moving towards digital services and councillors are ever more dependent on digital devices and social media. Both these factors potentially have an impact on the role of councillors and in particular the way in which they interact with constituents and also with officers within the council.

During the discussion on the item the following points were made:

- At the moment there is no specific guidance for members within the code of conduct regarding social media and digital technology and there is no training specifically related to this.
- In view of the increasing use of social media, improper use of social media could be a potential for a code of conduct complaint against members.
- There may be a need for clearer guidance on when a member, whilst using social media, is acting in their capacity as a member, as a campaigner or in their private capacity.
- Officers to look at the feasibility of providing guidance and training for members in social media and digital services.
- The director of law democracy pointed out that at present, the terms of reference of the standards committee includes to advise, train or arrange to train councillors on matters relating to the members' code of conduct but does not include broader member training. She advised that there is a proposal going to council assembly on 16 March 2016 to amalgamate the standards committee with the audit and governance committee, which would be renamed the audit, governance and standards committee to reflect the different roles. The existing standards sub-committees on civic awards and conduct would be retained as sub-committees of the audit, governance and standards committee.
- The standards (conduct) sub-committee would be vested with matters relating to the training of members on the code of conduct and consideration could be given for its term of reference to include broader member training.

ANY OTHER CLOSED BUSINESS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.

There was none.

Meeting ended at 7.40 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: