

MINUTES OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 12 JUNE 2018

Present:

Councillor Jackson (in the Chair)

Councillors

Clapham	Mrs Henderson	L Williams
Collett	Hunter	

In Attendance:

Mrs Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Mr Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships/ Monitoring Officer

Mr Chris Williams, Democratic Services Adviser

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared on this occasion.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2018

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3 STANDARDS UPDATE REPORT

Mr Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships/ Monitoring Officer, provided an update report on standards issues, including the recent response to the Local government ethical standards: stakeholder consultation and requested that the Committee consider training topics for the induction period for newly Elected Members following the 2019 local election. Also included in the update was the protocol between Lancashire Constabulary and the Monitoring Officer which had been revised following a number of suggestions from the previous Committee meeting.

The Committee noted the update of issues in the last 12 months and considered the actions which had been undertaken since the last meeting. It was also noted that elected members had access to the Employee Assistance programme should they need any support whilst the subject of a complaint. It was reported that elected members had recently been sent a request to undertake a review of their register of interest forms. This in the future would be repeated following each year's annual meeting. Mrs Hurst added that the deadline for submission of updated interest forms would be in mid-July 2018 and encouraged Members to prioritise the completion of the relevant paperwork.

Mr Towers advised that the Annual Council meeting had agreed to alter the constitution to reflect changes required to dealing with the declaration of interests in Executive Member reports at Council as had been recommended by the committee at its last meeting.

In relation to further training of Members on the Code of Conduct and related Protocols,

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Mr Towers advised that with the local election less than 12 months away, it had been suggested that further training be targeted at the new Council in 2019. The Committee noted that training on registering and declaring interests had been well received. Mr Towers welcomed feedback on the training delivered so far in order to improve and adapt it for future sessions. Committee members suggested that given the prominence of social media in contemporary society, perhaps more reference could be made to this in various training sessions and perhaps be incorporated more generally into standards as a whole. Members agreed that for them the use of social media represented a risk and could have an adverse effect on behaviour and standards if used incorrectly or maliciously.

The Committee discussed the consultation response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life review of local government ethical standards. A workshop had been held with Fylde Borough Council to formulate a joint response outlining the views of both groups. Those Members in attendance at the workshop favoured stronger sanctions being available for Standards Committees to deal with certain areas of misconduct such as bullying and intimidation. Praise was offered for the amount of joint working between Blackpool and Fylde Borough Councils as an example of good practice for other Councils to consider adopting. It was also suggested that there should be a 'model' code of conduct (as existed prior to the Localism Act) to ensure consistency across Councils and also some form of national guidance in relation to registering and declaring interests.

Mr Towers indicated that a formal response to the consultation was expected from the Committee on Standards in Public Life but no date had been set for this to be published.

The Committee considered the contents of the update report and the draft protocol between Lancashire Constabulary and the Monitoring Officer.

Resolved:

1. To note the update report.
2. To agree the draft protocol between the Lancashire Constabulary and the Monitoring Officer.
3. To support a focus on further standards training following the next election in 2019.

4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.27 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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