

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

HELD: Tuesday, 19 September 2023

Start: 7.00 pm

Finish: 7.23 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor: Y Gagen (Chairman)

Councillors:	D Westley	P Burnside
	V Cummins	A Fennell
	T De Freitas	N Furey
	J Witter	Webster
Independent Persons:	S Garvey	M Fawcett

In attendance: Councillor G Dowling

Officers: Kay Lovelady, Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Duncan Jowitt, Democratic Services Officer

19 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received.

20 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, the Committee noted the termination of Councillor Howard, and the appointment of Councillor De Freitas for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups.

21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Westley declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 because as a parish councillor, he had been a former colleague of one of the applicants, George Pratt, but was not a close friend.

22 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business.

23 **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There were no items under this heading.

24 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25 **APPOINTMENT OF PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Head of Legal & Democratic Services submitted a report asking the Standards Committee to consider the suitability of two applications from Parish Councillors to be appointed to Standards Committee.

Members considered the concerns raised regarding the potential for accusations of conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest in any future business of the Committee as outlined in the report, which might preclude Parish Councillor George Pratt from undertaking the role of Parish Council Representative.

RESOLVED: That the application from Parish Councillor Andrew Grant be approved and the application from Parish Councillor George Pratt be rejected.

26 **COMPLAINTS STATISTICS**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the Complaints Statistics as contained on pages 15-18 of the Book of Reports, which provided Members with statistical information in relation to Standards Complaints for the period 14 March 2023 to 19 September 2023.

In total 4 complaints had been received, 3 of which related to parish councillors. The other was in relation to a person who was no longer a borough councillor. None required further action. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services thanked both Independent Persons for their invaluable input.

Councillors asked about the process for dealing with vexatious complaints and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services said the procedural rules covered the steps that could be taken.

RESOLVED: That the Standards Complaints Statistics attached at appendix 1, be noted.

27 **STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the Standards Committee Annual Report as contained on pages 19-30 of the Book of Reports and explained that when the new governance arrangements were in place, reports would be back on the regular cycle.

Councillors asked whether offensive messages about the council made by members of the public could be removed from the council's social media accounts, and it was agreed that this would be raised with the Communications Team.

RESOLVED: That the Standards Committee Annual Report 2022/23, attached as an Appendix to the report, be noted, endorsed, and published on the Council's website.

28 **WORK PROGRAM**

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

.....
Chairman