

Minutes of a meeting of the **STANDARDS PANEL** held in the Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, on Wednesday, 3 April 2019 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

G R Aley (Chairman)

B Alcock
J R Astill

M G Chandler
P C Foyster

In Attendance: Strategic Manager – Governance and Tony Wicks, Independent Person.

10) **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

11) **MINUTES**

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

12) **ANNUAL STANDARDS REPORT 2018-2019**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director – Strategy and Governance setting out the number of complaints that had been received over the previous year.

Councillors noted that the Localism Act 2011 required Councils to have in place arrangements for dealing with complaints against members. The Council's arrangements were reviewed by the Standards Panel and thereafter adopted by full Council in November 2017.

The Standards Arrangements adopted by the Council require that an annual report is presented to the Standards Panel. The report provided information relating to work undertaken since the previous annual report made to the Standards Panel in April 2017. Five complaints had been received. For two of the complaints, initial information was in the process of being sought. For two further complaints, an investigation was underway. One complaint had been resolved with no breach being found.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

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13) PROSPECTIVE CHANGES TO THE STANDARDS REGIME

The Panel received a verbal update from the Executive Manager – Governance setting out prospective changes to the Standards regime.

Councillors considered the following points proposed by the Committee on Standards in Public Life:

- The possible re-introduction of a Model Code of Conduct.
- Widening the rules on disclosable pecuniary interests
- Removing criminal sanctions for disclosable pecuniary interest breaches
- Strengthening the role of the Independent person and providing legal protection but also setting a maximum term of office.
- Enabling more significant sanctions – including suspension from office without allowances for up to 6 months (with right of appeal to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman).
- Ensuring Monitoring Officers get sufficient training, resources and support.
- Greater employment protection for the Monitoring Officer
- Rules around conflict of interest where decisions are made by separate bodies associated with the Council (e.g. our companies).

AGREED:

That the verbal updated be noted and that the Executive Manager – Governance circulates a copy of the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life to members of the Standards Panel and the Independent Person.

14) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business.

(The meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.)

(End of minutes)