
Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	24 February 2016
Present	Councillor Runciman – Chair (CYC Member) Councillor Cannon (CYC member) Councillor Hayes (CYC member) Councillor Kramm (CYC Member - substitute for Councillor Taylor) Councillor Mercer (CYC Member) Councillor Waudby (Parish council member)
In attendance	Mr Laverick – Independent Person

Apologies	Councillors Taylor and Perrett
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Part A - Matters dealt with under delegated powers

13. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

14. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved: That Councillor Perrett be appointed Vice-Chair of the Joint Standards Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

15. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 26 November 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

16. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Ms Gwen Swinburn requested that the committee gave consideration to the following issues:

- Referring to the fact that two of the reports on the agenda were verbal, a request was made that, to increase transparency, written reports be submitted with all agenda items.
- Referring to the committee's terms of reference, a request was made that consideration be given to appointing co-opted members to the committee.
- Concerns were expressed that councillors who were appointed to serve on outside bodies by the Council were not required to disclose any allowance they received in that capacity.
- A request was made that expenditure on travel incurred by the Council on behalf of Members was made publically available.

17. Update on appointment of Independent Person

The Monitoring Officer gave a verbal update on the recruitment of an Independent Person. Members were informed that, to date, two applications had been received. Members were asked to consider interview arrangements.

Resolved: That the interview panel comprise Councillors Runciman, Waudby and Hayes (and the Monitoring Officer in an advisory capacity).¹

Reason: To progress the appointment of an Independent Person.

It was noted that the appointment would require ratification by Full Council.

Action Required

1. Make arrangements for interviews

JC

18. Members serving on Outside Bodies

Consideration was given to a report which provided a copy of guidance which had previously been issued to Members serving on outside bodies. The guidance was due for a refresh and the committee was asked to identify areas which it might be helpful to include within revised guidance.

Members suggested that, in view of the changing status of some of the schools in the Council's area, the section in the guidance on school governors required updating.

Referring to the fact that some Members received allowances from outside bodies to which they had been appointed by the Council, a suggestion was put forward that details of any such allowance should be published on the Council's website to increase transparency. It was noted that currently Members declared their membership of outside bodies on which they served but there was no legal requirement for them to declare any allowance they received for doing so.

Discussion took place regarding other issues in respect of Members serving on outside bodies, including mechanisms for feeding back to other Members of Council and the differing status and responsibilities held by the representatives. It was agreed that it would be useful for issues in respect of Member appointments to outside bodies to be subject to scrutiny review.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the existing guidance, and the intention to refresh the guidance, be noted.
 - (ii) That, when the refresh of the guidance was carried out, consideration be given to the points raised by Members, as outlined above.¹
 - (iii) That Members' comments regarding the possibility of publishing on the Council's website, details of any allowances received by Members for serving on outside bodies as the Council's representative, be forwarded to Group Leaders for discussion with their Groups and their comments to be fed back to the committee.²
 - (iv) That the Committee's suggestion that issues in respect of CYC Members serving on outside bodies be a topic for scrutiny review, be forwarded to the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.³

Reason: To ensure that Members are aware of the current guidance and have an opportunity to input into its refresh.

Action Required

1. Take into consideration during refresh of the guidance AD
2. Forward to Group Leaders AD
3. Forward to Corporate & Scrutiny Management Policy AD
Committee

19. Ethical Standards for Providers of Public Services

Consideration was given to a report which drew Members' attention to new guidance produced by the Committee on Standards in Public Life relating to ethical standards for providers of public services. Members were asked to consider whether they would wish to undertake any further work on this matter.

Members agreed that there were issues in the report which merited further consideration, for example those in respect of procurement. It was agreed that it would be useful to hold a training session on this issue later in the year and for the session to be open to members of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee.¹

Resolved: That the guidance be noted.

Reason: To ensure that Members are aware of the new guidance.

Action Required

1. Include in committee's work plan/development plan JC

20. Monitoring Report in respect of complaints received

Members' attention was drawn to the written report that had been presented at the previous meeting, which had given statistics and information on complaints received in respect of City of York councillors and parish councillors.

<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=8728&Ver=4>

The Monitoring Officer gave a verbal update in respect of two active complaints. Both of the complaints related to parish councils.

Resolved: That the update on complaints received and the progress in investigating the complaints be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is kept updated on the number and nature of complaints received.

21. Review of Work Plan

Members were asked to review the committee's work plan and to suggest items for consideration at future meetings.

Noting the suggestion that had been made at the committee's development session that training be offered to Parish Councillors on standards issues, it was agreed that the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations should be approached to ascertain the training they made available to parish councillors in order to avoid duplication.¹

Members agreed that it would be useful for the Committee to consider the arrangements that were in place in respect of the way that Planning Panels were appointed and operated.²

Resolved: That, subject to the inclusion of a report being presented to the committee on Planning Panels, the committee's work plan be approved.

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

Action Required

1. Contact YLCA for information
2. Write report

JC
AD

Part B - Matters referred to Council

22. Review of the Code of Conduct

Members considered a report that followed on from the report considered at the previous meeting. The report asked Members to recommend revisions to the current Code of Conduct for Members.

Members queried the position in respect of co-opted members of scrutiny task groups. The Monitoring Officer stated that the definition of "co-opted member" in the Code was taken from the

legislation. As scrutiny task groups were not sub-committees of the authority, and their members did not have voting rights, the co-opted members would not be covered by the Code. Members requested that further consideration be given to this issue in view of the expectation that anyone performing a public duty should demonstrate ethical behaviour.

The following amendments were also requested to the draft Code:

- Definitions Section - Amendment to formatting of paragraph 2.1 to give greater clarity
- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests – heading for para 3 to be amended to read “Non participation in items of business in the case of disclosable pecuniary interest”
- Disclosure of Interests Section – “vote” to be amended to “voting” (paragraph 5)
- Dispensations Section – Final sentence to be amended to state that the reasons for the dispensation will also be recorded.

Members requested that the amendments be incorporated into the draft and circulated to them prior to the revised Code being presented to Council for approval at its meeting on 24 March 2016.¹

Recommend: That the revised Code of Conduct for City Council Members be approved.

Reason: To ensure that the City of York Council has an effective and easily understood Code of Conduct.

Action Required

1. Incorporate amendments into draft Code

AD

Councillor Runciman, Chair

[The meeting started at 3.00 pm and finished at 4.15 pm].