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Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	19 January 2023
Present	Councillors Rowley (Chair), D'Agorne, Fisher, Galvin and Kilbane (CYC Members) Councillors Rawlings (Vice Chair), Chambers and Waudby (Parish Council Members)  Mr Gadd ( <i>attending remotely</i> ) and Mr Leigh (Independent Persons)
Officer in Attendance	Frances Harrison – Deputy Monitoring Officer

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## 21. **Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable interests not included on the Register of Interests, which they might have in respect of business on the agenda.

Cllr Fisher declared a non registrable interest in two of the cases on the list appended to the report at Agenda Item 8 (Monitoring Report in respect of Complaints Received), due to his involvement in those cases. He left the room during consideration of that item and took no part in the discussion or decision thereon.

## 22. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt versions of Annexes A and B to Agenda Item 8 (Monitoring Report in Respect of Complaints Received), on the grounds that they contain information likely to reveal the identity of individuals, which is classed as exempt under Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

## **23. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 17 November 2023 be approved, and signed as a correct record, subject to the addition of a note against the attendances to indicate that Mr Gadd attended remotely.

## **24. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

## **25. Work undertaken and support offered by the Yorkshire Local Councils Association**

Members received a report which provided information on the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations (YLCA) and its role in building positive links with parish and town councils, including details of the benefits and training that it offered to its members (Annexes A and B).

Sheena Spence, Chief Officer of YLCA, attended the meeting to expand upon the report and respond to any questions. She outlined the history and purpose of Local Councils Associations in England and Wales and highlighted the extent of the YLCA membership, which currently comprised 560 local councils and parish meetings. In response to Members' questions, she confirmed that:

- Take-up of training was generally good and remote training had also worked well.
- She was happy to consider the idea of Independent Persons attending training sessions.
- She and the Deputy Monitoring Officer had discussed possible training for CYC Members about parish councils.
- CYC was not unique in the number of Code of Conduct complaints it received about parish councillors; these often resulted from not understanding which interests to declare.
- It might be appropriate to refer councillors who had breached the code to some of the sessions on the training programme.
- Where a whole council was dysfunctional this could be addressed by a 'health check' of its policies and

procedures or a full governance review leading to an action plan.

- High vacancy rates on parish councils were a problem; it was not clear if CYC could assist with this as it was about making the role more attractive and PCs themselves needed to be proactive.

The Chair thanked Ms Spence for her attendance and contribution.

Resolved: That the information shared by the YLCA be noted.

## **26. Review of Work Plan**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the current municipal year.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved.

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

## **27. Monitoring Report in respect of Complaints Received**

Members considered a report which provided an update on current business as regards complaints.

An anonymised list of live complaints was attached at Annex A to the report, and an anonymised list of closed complaints at Annex B. Full details were provided in an exempt version of each annex. The annexes were provided in the revised format suggested by Members at the last meeting.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that all of the ongoing cases on the list were under investigation and were close to conclusion in terms of finalising the reports. Discussion of the exempt lists took place in private session, in accordance with the resolution in Minute 15 above.

Cllr Fisher did not take part in either the public or the private session on this item.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the committee is aware of current levels of activity.

Cllr M Rowley BEM, Chair

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.17 pm.