

Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	19 April 2017
Present	Councillors Runciman (Chair), Cannon, Hayes and Mercer - CYC Members Councillors Perrett (Vice-Chair) and Wiseman - Parish Councillors
Apologies	Councillor Kramm, Mr Laverick and Ms Davies

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## **26. 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. No additional interests were declared.

## **27. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 1 February 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **28. Minutes of Sub-Committees**

Resolved: That the minutes of the Assessments Sub-Committee meeting of 31 March 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **29. Public Participation**

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

### 30. **Monitoring Report on Complaints Received**

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

Members noted that, at the time the report had been published, there had been two new complaints which were both against City of York Councillors and which related to behaviour in Council meetings.

Members agreed that complaints between Councillors should generally be discouraged, as the standards system primarily existed for members of the public to raise ethical concerns.

The Monitoring Officer informed Members that since the report had been published a further two complaints had been received. One of the complaints was against a City of York Councillor and the other was against a Parish Councillor.

- Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Monitoring Officer be instructed to write to Group Leaders, Whips and the Independent Councillors to remind them that the Committee expects that they will be proactive in seeking to resolve differences between Councillors and to ask them to use their influence to avoid standards complaints being submitted.<sup>1</sup>

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is aware of current levels of activity and that the standards complaints system is used for its primary purpose.

#### Action Required

1. Write to Group Leaders, Whips and Independent Members AD

### **31. Update on Planning Issues**

Members considered a report which updated the Committee on a number of planning issues that had been raised at previous meetings.

Referring to the information that had been presented in respect of Planning Panels, Members sought clarification as to whether all of the non-parished areas were covered by Planning Panels. They suggested that, if this was not the case, the relevant Ward Committees may wish to consider whether it would be appropriate to establish a Planning Panel.

Members also noted that the draft Code of Conduct for Ward Planning Panel Members did not include a requirement for the members to make a declaration of their interests, including any interests they may have in properties in the area. They suggested that consideration be given to including this information on the Council's website under the relevant Ward Committee information.

Members requested feedback on the training that had taken place for Planning Panel members and the numbers who had taken part in the training.

Copies of draft guidance on in respect of Planning Site Visits and how these would be conducted, had been circulated. It was noted that consultation had taken place with the Chair of the Main Planning Committee. Councillor Cannon informed the Members that she had sought the views of the Vice-Chairs of the Main Planning Committee and the Area Planning Sub-Committee who had welcomed the document but suggested that further consideration be given to the statement "On very rare occasions it might be advantageous to view an application from inside a building and therefore more appropriate for only the Chair and an Officer to enter the premises". It was important that health and safety implications were taken into account. Members agreed that the document would be very useful and suggested that it be placed on the Council's website as well as being made available at site visits and circulated to Members of the Main Planning Committee and the Area Sub-Committee.

Discussion took place regarding options for the timing of speakers at meetings. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that

this issue was under active consideration and that Officers were considering the models that were available.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the update on action since the last meeting be noted.
  - (ii) That the draft Code of Conduct for Planning Panel Members be approved for further consultation.
  - (iii) That the further suggestions put forward regarding Planning Panels, including the declaring of interests by Planning Panel members, be forwarded for consideration<sup>1</sup>.
  - (iv) That Members' comments on the draft Protocol for Planning Site Visits be forwarded to the relevant officers<sup>1</sup>.
  - (v) That an update on the issues raised be presented at the next meeting<sup>1</sup>.

Reason: To support high ethical standards in planning processes.

Action Required

1. Feedback Members' comments to relevant officers and provide an update report for next meeting AD

**32. Parish Representation on the Joint Standards Committee**

Members considered a report which sought the views of the Committee on how best to fill the current Parish vacancy.

Members noted that the Committee currently had a vacancy for a Parish representative but that only one nomination had been received. A suggestion had been put forward that the Committee could host an event to try to develop some interest in its work and encourage more nominations to come forward.

Members were asked to consider the following options and identify a way forward:

- a) Recommend that the City Council approve the current nomination.
- b) Consider ways in which more interest in the role could be created and, thereafter, ask YLCA to undertake a further recruitment exercise.
- c) Undertake a review of the Joint Committee arrangements and consider whether an alternative arrangement might allow for more effective engagement with Parish Councils.

Members agreed that they would wish to continue with the arrangement whereby parish council representatives were included in the membership of the committee.

The Vice-Chair expressed concern that not all parish councillors had been made aware of the vacancy. He stated that he knew of a parish councillor who was interested in serving on the Joint Standards Committee but who had not originally been aware of the vacancy.

Members agreed that it was also imperative that the representatives on the Joint Standards Committee were of the highest integrity. They agreed that it would be useful for a role description to be put in place.

Members discussed ways in which awareness of the vacancy could be raised. The following suggestions were put forward:

- A drop-in event whereby parish councillors could meet with the Chair, Vice-Chair and other members of the Committee to find out more about the role.
- A request for the Chair to be invited to attend a YLCA meeting to talk about the role and the vacancy.
- Preparation of an information sheet about the role.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the report be noted.
  - (ii) That the suggestions put forward to raise awareness of the role and to draw up a role description be put in place.<sup>1</sup>
  - (iii) That, in view of the proposed action to increase awareness of the role, the vacancy not be filled at this time.

Reason: To ensure that the City Council effectively engages with Parish Councils in promoting high standards of ethical conduct for all local Councillors.

Action Required

1. Co-ordinate suggested strategies

AD

**33. Review of Work Plan**

Members gave consideration to the committee's work plan and were asked to suggest items for inclusion on the agendas for the municipal year.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the following:

- The date of the next meeting to be moved from Wednesday 7 June to Wednesday 5 July 2017 at 4.00pm.
- Agenda item on feedback re Planning Issues to be included on the agenda for the meeting on 5 July 2017.
- Review of the Member Code of Conduct to be considered at the meeting on 2 August 2017.

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

Councillor Runciman, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 4.50 pm].