
Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	5 July 2017
Present	Councillors Runciman (Chair), Cannon, Hayes, Kramm and Mercer (CYC Members) Councillors Perrett and Wiseman (Parish Councillors)
Apologies	Mr Laverick and Ms Davies

1. Appointment of Chair

Resolved: That Councillor Runciman be appointed as Chair of the Joint Standards Committee for the municipal year.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

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

3. 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.

4. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 19 April 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

5. Public Participation

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

6. Review Of Complaints For The Last Municipal Year

Members considered a report which gave details of the standards complaints received during the previous municipal year.

The Monitoring Officer stated that he had written to Group Leaders with regard to complaints between Councillors. As yet he had not received a response.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee continues to make an effective contribution to ethical standards within the City Council.

7. Monitoring Report on Complaints Received

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

During discussion of this item an issue was raised regarding 'prejudicial interests' and non-formally recognised relationships. The Monitoring Officers suggested this could be considered during the upcoming review of the member Code of Conduct. As it was felt this issue applied to Parish Councillors in the same way the Committee suggested that the parish Councils Code of Conduct be added to the work plan.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted an ongoing complaint regarding a Parish Councillor and clarified that this had now been referred for investigation.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

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

8. Parish Council Membership

Members considered a report updating them on steps taken since the last meeting to fill the current Parish vacancy.

The Chair spoke about the work she had undertaken with the Vice Chair and highlighted some issues raised during a 'drop in' for parish Councillors.

Following discussion of these points, the Committee clarified that the following should be included in the role description:

- The Terms of Office should be consistent for both CYC and Parish Councillors.
- There should be a minimum 12 month period between a complaint being upheld and a Councillor being appointed to the Joint Standards Committee.
- If a complaint was upheld against a current member of the Committee there should be an expectation that they would resign.

It was also decided that:

- If a complaint was taken to a formal hearing, the period of time before a Member could be appointed to the Joint Standards Committee would be included in the decision (minimum of 12 months).
- Councillor complaints regarding fellow Councillors should be referred to parish Council Chairs or Group Leaders for mediation in the first instance.
- YCLA would be informed of upheld complaints with regard Parish Councillors.

Resolved: That Members;

- i. Note the update on action since the last meeting.
- ii. Approve the draft role description for Parish Council Members of the Standards Committee with the additions discussed.
- iii. Amend the Committee's procedures for dealing with complaints to include consideration of a time period required before considering the Member for appointment to the Joint Standards Committee.

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

9. Feedback on Planning Issues

At the last meeting Members approved for consultation a draft code of conduct for Planning Panel Members.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted that initial and helpful feedback had been received from the Communities and Equalities team, who support the Ward Committees from which Planning Panels are drawn. While supportive of the principles underpinning the code, they had suggested that some changes to the wording could help the code be received more positively.

Members approved the recommended changes and asked that the word “should” in paragraphs 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.7 of the revised draft code be replaced with the word “must”. Members also asked that paragraph 3.1 of the draft code be amended to include a requirement that Panel Members withdraw from the consideration of applications in the circumstances described.

Resolved: That Members approve the revised draft code, subject to the above amendments, for consultation with Planning Panel Members.

Reason: To ensure that Planning Panels can command public confidence.

Councillor Runciman, Chair

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.00 pm.