
Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	14 May 2024
Present	Councillors Rowley BEM (Chair), Fisher, Lomas, Pavlovic, Runciman (CYC Members), Councillor Chambers (Parish Council Member)
	Mr J Leigh (Independent Person)
Apologies	Parish Councillor Rawlings and Ms R Mazza (Independent Person)
Officers Present	Frances Harrison, Deputy Monitoring Officer Helen Whiting, Head of HR Claire Foale, Assistant Director, Policy and Strategy

49. Declarations of Interest (4:02 pm)

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

Cllr Fisher noted that he was named as a party in the complaints received log.

50. Exclusion of Press and Public (4:03 pm)

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 11 (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.

51. Minutes (4:04 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 08 April 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

52. Minutes of Sub-Committees (4:04 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the following sub-committee meetings be approved and signed as a correct record:

- Hearings Sub-Committee, 18 April 2024, 1:30pm
- Hearings Sub-Committee, 18 April 2024, 2:45pm

53. Public Participation (4:05 pm)

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

54. Officer Support Protocols (4:05 pm)

The Head of HR introduced her report and outlined the support available to officers who make, or wish to make, a complaint against councillors.

Members were in agreement that the support of a trade union representative would be beneficial to officers in these circumstances. Officers reported that the protocols were embedded within the organisation as there was a culture of being able to raise concerns; Managers were aware of the appropriate processes to follow once a concern had been raised.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. A review of current procedures should be escalated to either Audit and Governance or the Constitution Working Group to consider:
 - a. Enabling and making explicit that complainants who are members of staff be given a right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or TU representative in any investigatory

- meeting and/or formal hearing in line with other employment practices.
- b. How best to support a complainant who is an officer during and after any Standards investigation and/or Hearing.
 - c. That the Trade Union representative to be briefed on the Standards Hearing Procedures before attending a hearing.

Reason: To ensure that procedures are fully embedded in the council's constitution.

55. Member Induction (4:28 pm)

The Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy provided an overview of her report on the Member Induction programme and noted that Veritau were auditing Member engagement for Induction and would be reporting in July.

Members discussed with Officers their own experiences of the programme and highlighted difficulties in accessing the systems used. Members emphasised the benefits of peer to peer learning, welcomed the recording of the sessions which provided flexibility for Members and discussed the possibility of extending the training, especially standards training to Parish Councillors.

It was reported that officers were working towards using one platform for all training which should improve accessibility and they would look to build in more Member-led training sessions in future. YLCA (Yorkshire Local Councils Association) training was highlighted as being readily available to Parishes.

It was also noted that the political breakdown of the attendance figures was not especially relevant, as the political parties varied both in size and balance of new / returning members.

Resolved: That the report be noted, and the feedback, outlined above be considered for future member development programmes.

Reason: To ensure that the high standards of conduct expected of Members be communicated through the induction programme.

56. Review of The Case Handling Procedure For Complaints Under The Member Code Of Conduct (Appendix 29 Of The Council's Constitution) Update (4:51 pm)

The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced her report on the Case Handling Procedure for complaints, noting that this had been brought to the Committee in November. She emphasised that her recommendations must be balanced against the efficient use of resources.

Members welcomed the report and expressed their desire to have the recommendations brought to the constitutional working group in the near future.

Resolved:

- i. That the update be noted.
- ii. Officers to take a report on the Case Handling Procedure to the Constitutional Working Group as soon as possible.

Reason: To ensure that the changes are actioned promptly.

57. Review of Work Plan (5:06 pm)

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

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

- A verbal update on the progress of the Case Handling Procedure to be brought to July's meeting.

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

58. Monitoring Report On Complaints Received (5:07 pm)

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

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 4.01 pm and finished at 5.29 pm.