

Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	29 November 2017
Present	Councillors Runciman, Cannon, Hayes, Kramm and Mercer (CYC Members) Councillor Perrett (Parish Council Member)
Apologies	Councillor Wiseman (Parish Council Member) Mr Laverick and Ms Davies (Independent Members)

15. 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 had in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

16. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 2 August 2017 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

17. Minutes of Sub-Committees

Resolved: That the minutes of the Assessments Sub-Committee meeting held on 22 September 2017 be noted, to be signed at the next Sub-Committee meeting by the Chair of that meeting.

18. Public Participation

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

19. Monitoring Report on Complaints Received

Members considered a report which provided an update on recent standards complaints.

Since the last meeting in August, three new cases had been opened. One had been referred to an Assessments Sub-Committee and was ongoing, one was thought not to merit any action and the third was awaiting more information before it could be processed. Another case previously subject to investigation had been discontinued, as the councillor involved had since resigned from the Parish Council.

In response to Members' questions, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that there was no further progress to report on the case considered by the Assessments Sub-Committee on 22 September.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

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

20. Reviewing the Code of Conduct

Members considered a report which provided an update on progress made by the task group established to review the City of York Council's code of conduct.

The task group had already met twice and had now discussed the whole of the code and identified a number of areas for improvement. At least one more meeting was required to discuss suggested revisions, and the aim was to bring a draft revised code to the Standards Committee on 31 January.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is aware of progress being made by the task group.

21. Response to Consultation - Changes to Disqualification Criteria

Members considered a report which sought their views on the proposal by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to alter the disqualification criteria in Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The proposed alteration would update the criteria that disqualified an individual from holding or standing for office as a local authority member, by including anyone subject to:

- The notification requirements in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (i.e. anyone 'on the sex offenders register');
- A civil injunction under s.1 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014; or
- A Criminal Behaviour Order under s.22 of the same Act.

A draft response to the consultation questions on the proposal was attached as Annex 1 to the report. This broadly supported the changes, but suggested that the criteria should also include people subject to a Sexual Risk Order (Q2) and expressed the view that further legislative changes to provide more effective sanctions in the standards regime would be welcomed (Q6).

Members were invited to accept the draft response (Option 1), make changes to it before submission (Option 2) or not to respond (Option 3). The deadline for responses was 8 December 2017.

Resolved: That the draft response be approved, subject to the addition of wording at Q6 to express Members' view that account be taken of the age of the individual at the time any order or injunction was imposed upon them.

Reason: To endorse this small step in the right direction of reinforcing the legal framework through which good conduct in public life can be regulated, whilst seeking to address the absence of effective sanctions, which remains a significant failing in the current regime.

22. Review of Work Plan

Members considered to the committee's work plan for the remainder of the 2017-18 municipal year and whether they wished to suggest further items for inclusion on the plan.

The Chair indicated that, should there be no business for any meeting other than the routine monitoring report on complaints received, that meeting would be cancelled and the report circulated to Members instead.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the following additions to the agenda for the meeting on 31 January:

- Review of the CYC's Code of Conduct – advice of the task group
- A code of conduct for Planning Panels.

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

Cllr C Runciman, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 4.35 pm].