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Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	31 March 2021
Present	Councillors Rowley (Chair), Carr, Cullwick ( <i>Substituting for Cllr Fisher and present for Agenda Items 7-10 only; minutes 83-85 refer</i> ) and Douglas (CYC Members) Cllrs Chambers and Waudby (Parish Council Members)
	Ms Davies and Mr Laverick (Independent Persons)
Apologies	Councillors Baker and Fisher (CYC Members) Cllr Rawlings (Parish Council Member)

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### Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed Parish Councillor Mark Waudby as a new member of the committee.

#### 78. **Declarations of Interest**

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. None were declared.

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

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Annex B to Agenda Item 11 (Monitoring Report in Respect of Complaints Received), on the grounds that it contains 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.

## **80. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021 be approved as a correct record, to be signed by the Chair at a later date, subject to an amendment to Minute 74 (Update on International Travel Protocol) to include Members' comment that the Protocol should:

- include a requirement to state who is paying for the travel if it is not paid for by the Council.

## **81. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Gwen Swinburn spoke in relation to Agenda Item 87 (Monitoring Report on Complaints Received), expressing concerns that a complaint submitted against an Executive Member had been dismissed by the Monitoring Officer without publishing the reasons.

## **82. Draft Annual Report for 2020/21**

Members considered a report which provided an update on the committee's Annual Report to Council for the 2020/21 municipal year.

A draft version of the Annual Report had been prepared by the Monitoring Officer and was attached at Annex A. Members were invited to comment on the draft before its presentation to Council.

With regard to the section headed 'Dispensation of the 6 Month Rule During Lockdown, officers confirmed that:

- The dispensations related to CYC meetings only;
- The expiry date of the dispensations would be included in the final version.

Resolved: (i) That Members email any further requests for additions to the draft to the Chair, Vice Chair and Monitoring Officer.

(ii) That the final version of the Annual Report be brought to the next meeting of the committee.

Reason: To enable the Annual Report to be presented to Full Council in July 2021.

### **83. Update on Model Code of Conduct**

Members considered a report which provided an update on the Model Code of Conduct.

A new version of the Model Code, published by the Local Government Association (LGA) in January 2021, was attached as Annex A to the report. Members' views were invited as to whether this, or any part of it, should replace the council's current Code of Conduct (Annex B).

Members commented that:

- It would be helpful to have an Executive Summary to accompany the Model Code, once adopted, as a guide to its detailed content.
- A 'refresher' on the Code of Conduct should be included in the annual Member Development training.
- Consideration should be given to the inclusion in the Model Code of sections on gifts and hospitality, registration of the interests of a spouse or partner, and dispensations in relation to disclosure of interests.
- The section on dispensations should reflect a tightening up of the provisions in paragraph 8 of the current Code.

Resolved: That officers note the views expressed by Members on the Model Code of Conduct.

Reason: To ensure that the advice of the Joint Standards Committee on adoption of the Model Code is taken into account.

*Note: there was a short adjournment during the above item while the Chair took advice from the Monitoring Officer in relation to substitutes on the committee.*

### **84. Member Development**

Members considered a report which provided an update on Member Development.

As agreed at the meeting on 20 January 2021, a list of questions had been prepared to canvas the opinion of all Council Members on this topic. Comments were invited on the four questions, which were set out in paragraph 2 of the report.

Members commented that:

- Question 2, on mandatory and optional training, should be expanded further;
- Question 3 should ask *how* Members' attendance at required training should be monitored, not who should monitor it;
- There should be a question on when, and how often, refresher training ought to take place;
- The consultation should also provide some ideas on subject areas for training, as discussed at the last meeting.

Resolved: That the questions be amended in line with the above comments then shared with Group Leaders and Independent Members, requesting their responses to the Chair and the Monitoring Officer within 4 to 6 weeks.

Reason: In order to canvas the views of Council Members on Member Development and Training.

## **85. Update on International Travel Protocol**

Members considered a report which provided an update on the draft International Travel Protocol discussed at the last meeting.

A copy of the draft Protocol, incorporating the comments made by Members at the last meeting, was attached as Annex A to the report. Members were invited to comment further before the Protocol was considered by Audit & Governance Committee as part of their review of the Constitution.

In addition to the amendment noted under Minute 80 above, Members agreed that the last bullet point under the heading 'Actions to be taken prior to approval being granted' should be amended to read as follows:

- "Provide evidence of the payment of any expenses during the trip (i.e. room service, drinks etc.)"

Resolved: That the draft Protocol be further amended in line with Members' comments before it is presented to Audit & Governance Committee.

Reason: To ensure that the views of the Joint Standards Committee are taken into account.

## **86. Review of Work Plan 2021/22**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the forthcoming 2021/22 municipal year.

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

Meeting on 23 June 2021:

- Annual Report
- Parish Council Charter
- Member Development
- Public Interest Test for assessment of complaints

Future meeting (date tbc):

- Recruitment of Independent Persons

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

## **87. Monitoring Report in Respect of Complaints Received**

Members considered a report which provided an update on the current position of ongoing complaints.

An anonymised list of complaints was attached as Annex A to the report. Further details of these were provided in an exempt list at Annex B. An exempt list of closed cases had also been provided, in an Agenda Supplement published on 30 March. Discussion of the exempt lists took place in private session, in accordance with the resolution in Minute 79 above.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

Reason: To confirm that the committee is aware of the current levels of activity and able to provide an oversight of the complaints procedure.

(ii) That the Chair and Vice Chair have further discussions with the Monitoring Officer in respect of matters raised under Public Participation.

Reason: In order to explore the matters raised.

Cllr M Rowley, Chair

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 6.03 pm.