

City of York Council	Minutes
Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	20 April 2022
Present	Councillor Rawlings (Parish Council Member, Vice-Chair, in the Chair) Councillors Rowley (Chair) (<i>present for Agenda Items 8-11</i>), Baker, Carr, Douglas and Fisher (CYC Members) Councillors Chambers and Waudby (Parish Council Members)
Apologies	Ms Davies (Independent Person)

46. 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.

Cllr Fisher declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 11 (Monitoring Report on Complaints Received), as the subject member of one of the cases on the list. He left the room during consideration of this item and took no part in the discussions or decision thereon.

Cllr Chambers also declared an interest in Item 11, as Vice-Chair of Strensall Parish Council (of which Cllr Fisher was Chair), and stated that he would leave the room if the case in question was discussed.

47. Exclusion of Press and Public

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 10 (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).

48. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 24 January 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

- Under Minute 35 (Declarations of Interest), amend 'Fisher' to 'Rowley' in the final paragraph.

49. Minutes of Sub-Committees

The Monitoring Officer advised that the minutes of the Hearings Sub-Committee on 8 March 2022 attached to the agenda not be approved, as they contained information that was additional to that in the Notice of Decision published after the hearing. The Notice of Decision contained all relevant information regarding the outcome of the hearing and a separate minute was not required.

50. Public Participation

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

51. Draft Annual Report for 2021/2022

Members considered a report which invited them to comment upon the committee's draft Annual Report for the 2021/22 Municipal Year, attached at Annex 1, ahead of its presentation to Full Council.

Following discussion, it was

Resolved: (i) That the draft be amended to:

- complete the 'Complaints' section;
- refer in the second paragraph of the 'Other work' section to the refresher training offered to Members on the Model Code of Conduct;
- add to the 'Dispensations' section the dispensation granted to Cllr Douglas on 12 October 2021;

- add a section on ‘Aspirations’, and a final section on work planned for the next year.

(ii) That the revised draft be shared with the Chair and Vice Chair then brought back to the committee for approval.

Reason: To ensure that the Annual Report presented to Council reflects the views of the committee.

52. Government response to the Committee for Standards in Public Life's Review of Local Government Ethical Standards

Members considered a report which informed them of the Government’s response to the review of Local Government Ethical Standards carried out by the Committee for Standards in Public Life.

The response, published on 18 March 2022, did not propose any immediate plans to amend or introduce legislation to deal with the matters raised. However, the Government did support and encourage local authorities to develop best practice. In York, the Joint Standards Committee had already responded positively to some of the recommendations, including adoption of the LGA Model Code and encouraging parish councils to adopt it, publishing an annual report, and clarity for councillors in respect of gifts and hospitality.

The response had been made available online as Annex A to the report. Following discussion, it was

Resolved: (i) That the Government response to the Committee for Standards in Public Life’s Review of Local Government Ethical Standards be noted.

(ii) That the Chair, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, write to the Local Government Minister to express Members’ concern that the response had not addressed the issue of sanctions in respect of breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Reason: To bring the committee’s views to the Government’s attention.

(iii) That the Monitoring Officer be asked to bring to the next meeting a list of 10 main points in relation to areas of best practice with details of progress made on these.

Reason: In order to monitor progress and inform the committee's work plan.

53. Dispensation granted to Councillors sitting on the Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee on 7 February 2022 to enable them to participate in a call -in of a decision taken by the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change.

Members considered a report which informed them of the granting of a dispensation to all Members of the Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (Calling-in) at the committee's meeting on 7 February 2022.

The dispensation had been granted to enable the Members to participate in the meeting, which related to the call-in of a decision made by the Executive Member for Transport on 'Weed Management of Highways and Associated Areas', despite all having in 2019 voted in favour of a motion to Council promoting the Pollinator Strategy. It had been granted to Cllrs Crawshaw, Fenton, Hollyer, Pearson, Orrell, Wann, Melly and Douglas by Cllr Rowley, as the Chair of Joint Standards Committee, and to Cllr Rowley himself by the Monitoring Officer.

Resolved: That the granting of the above dispensation be noted.

Reason: So that the committee has oversight of dispensations granted.

54. Review of Work Plan

Members considered the committee's work plan for the upcoming 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the following amendments / additions to the items listed for the June 2022 meeting:

- Annual Report - amend 'Draft' to 'Final';

- Add an item on Areas of Best Practice (as referenced in Minute 52 above).

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

55. Monitoring Report on Complaints Received

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

An anonymised list of live complaints was attached at Annex A to the report, and an anonymised list of closed complaints at Annex B. Full details were provided in an exempt version of each annex. Discussion of the exempt lists took place in private session, in accordance with the resolution in Minute 47 above.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

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

Cllr S Rawlings, Chair

The meeting started at 4:06 pm and finished at 5:06 pm.

This page is intentionally left blank