

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

14 July 2022

PRESENT: - Cllr N Poole (Chairman), J England (Vice-Chair), H Rayner, C O'Sullivan and D Wells, and Cllr D Wells

Mr Forbes (Independent Person)

The meeting was held at the Conference Room, Church Square House.

406 **SUBSTITUTIONS (IF ANY)**

Cllr Rayner substituted for Cllr Ali, and Cllr Wells substituted for Cllr Ross

407 **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and personal or personal and prejudicial interests made at the meeting.

408 **TO TAKE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 MARCH 2022 AS A CORRECT RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN.**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 16 March 2022, having been printed and circulated amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the chairman.

409 **ANNUAL REPORT 2021 / 2022**

The Director: Governance & Communities submitted the draft Annual Report of the Standards Committee, under the council's standards regime and the Localism Act, covering the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

In the draft Annual Report the Monitoring Officer referred to the number of complaints in 2020/21, and described which complaints were considered by an Assessment Panel, and which were determined by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person.

In the report, the Monitoring Officer informed the Standards Committee that, further to the training in previous years, an additional online training session had been hosted on 29 March 2022 for newly elected/co-opted councillors and newly-employed clerks of Town and Parish Councils. This session had been well-attended, and annual training would continue to be provided, including online or virtual sessions.

The Annual Report confirmed that the Monitoring Officer continued to meet regularly with his counterpart at North East Lincolnshire Council, the East

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Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Local Councils Association (ERNLLCA), and the Independent Persons, to review existing practice and keep abreast of national and regional developments.

The council continued to be a member of the Standards Exchange, a specialist website set up by practitioners as a platform to share good practice and to keep updated on national standards related developments.

Resolved – (a) That the 2021/22 Annual Report be approved, (b) that the Annual Report be circulated to all Town and Parish Councils in the North Lincolnshire area, (c) that the Annual Report be submitted to council, in accordance with the Annual Governance Statement; and (d) that the Independent Persons be thanked for their time, hard work, and commitment to supporting and advising the Standards Committee.

410 STANDARDS COMMITTEE - CO-OPTED MEMBER

The Director: Governance and Communities submitted a report on the position of co-opted member of the Standards Committee. The post had been vacant since September 2021, and members discussed the options for deleting or filling this post. The benefits of inviting the Independent Persons to each meeting of the Standards Committee were highlighted.

Resolved – That it be recommended to Council that the position of co-opted member of the Standards Committee be deleted.

411 GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CSPL REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS

The Director: Governance and Partnerships submitted a report summarising the government's response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's (CSPL) 2019 Review of Local Government Ethical Standards. The CSPL's review had made 26 recommendations to improve standards in local government.

The Monitoring Officer summarised the key government responses to these recommendations, highlighting that local arrangements were robust and closely aligned to the highest levels of ethical standards, as advocated by the government and the CSPL.

Resolved - That the Standards Committee note the Government's response to the CSPL's Review of Local Government Standards.

412 COMPLAINTS SCHEDULE - UPDATE.

The Director: Governance & Partnerships submitted a report updating the Standards Committee on progress made on all outstanding complaints and any relevant issues related to the Complaints Schedule. It was confirmed that a Standards Assessment Panel meeting would be held on the rising of the Standards Committee meeting.

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In relation to complaint SC/21/18 concerning Cllr P. Frankish of Kirton in Lindsey Town Council, the Monitoring Officer reported that the complaint has been 'locally resolved' in accordance with the Council's Standards Arrangements and in consultation with the Independent Person, following an apology by Cllr Frankish to the Investigating Officer for her error in relation to her declaration of interests, coupled with an assurance to pay closer attention to such matters in the future whilst expressing distress at her actions having caused the complaint and the work it has generated.

Resolved – (a) That the report be noted; and (b) that the Monitoring Officer, on behalf of the Standards Committee, forward a copy of this minute to Kirton Town Council regarding complaint SC/21/18 in order to note.

413 **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MUST BE SPECIFIED.**

There were no urgent or additional items for consideration at the meeting.