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## NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

### STANDARDS COMMITTEE

19 January 2023

**PRESENT:** - Cllr N Poole (Chairman)

Cllr J England (Vice-Chair), Cllr M Ali, Cllr C O'Sullivan and Cllr D Wells

Cllr S Swift

The meeting was held in the Conference Room, f01e, Church Square House.

443 **SUBSTITUTIONS (IF ANY)**

There were no substitutions. Cllr Swift attended the meeting under the provisions of Procedure Rule 1.37b

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

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

445 **TO TAKE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2022 AS A CORRECT RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN.**

**Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 9 November 2022, having been printed and circulated amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the chairman.

446 **DEBATE NOT HATE UPDATE - THE IMPACT OF ABUSE ON LOCAL DEMOCRACY**

The Director: Governance and Communities submitted a report providing an update on work arising from consideration of the recent Local Government Association (LGA) publication "Debate Not Hate" on preventing abuse and intimidation in public and political settings. The LGA report was considered at a previous meeting (minute 434 refers) and it was resolved that officers conduct further work on potential improvements, feeding back to the Standards Committee.

The report confirmed that, following internal discussions, the following actions had now been implemented or were planned.

- A dedicated system had been established within the Group Offices to record abusive, intimidatory or threatening communications. There was an option to pass these communications to Humberside Police's

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**19 January 2023**

- Single Point of Contact (SPOC) where required.
- Discussions continued to explore the possibility of the Confidential Counselling and Welfare Service being made available to the council's elected members, in line with staff. Members would be able to self-refer or be referred via Group Secretaries.
  - Discussions continued with Humberside Police to ascertain the Force's response to Recommendation 3 of the LGAs report which requires: "Police forces should work to improve the consistency of responses to abuse and threats made against councillors and take a risk-based approach that accounts for the specific risks that councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, such as MPs. This should include identifying best practice in relation to councillor support and safety and sharing it across the country." To this end, the Monitoring Officer had extended an invitation to the Police designated SPOC to attend the next Committee to provide an update on such matters.

The Standards Committee discussed these improvements and debated further steps to address the abuse and intimidation of elected members.

**Resolved** – That the Standards Committee note and welcome the improvements described by the Monitoring Officer and that additional measures continue to be explored and embedded.

**447 COMPLAINTS SCHEDULE - UPDATE.**

The Director: Governance & Communities submitted a report updating the Standards Committee on progress made on all outstanding complaints and investigations, and any relevant issues related to the Complaints Schedule.

**Resolved** – That the schedule be noted.

**448 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.