

NOTICE OF MEETING

COMMITTEE : STANDARDS

DATE : TUESDAY 6TH FEBRUARY 2018

TIME : 6.00 PM

PLACE : COMMITTEE ROOM 3, TOWN HALL

COUNCILLORS:	S. SALEEM (CHAIR)	PEDERSEN
	WORLDING (VICE CHAIR)	PETTS
	MJ DOLLING	R. SALEEM
	HUSSAIN	YOUNG
	MIRZA	
	MOLES	

**5 INDEPENDENT
MEMBERS:**

MS. P. BRENNAN

MR. J. JONES

MRS. M. BRIGGS

MS. M. WILLIAMS

MR. ANDREW MASLEN

**QUORUM : 5 MEMBERS (INCLUDING AT LEAST 2
INDEPENDENT MEMBERS)**

Contact Officer: Eunice Lewis

Direct Line: (01582) 547149

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

PURPOSE: This Committee considers any allegations that a Member has breached the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, relevant Standing Orders or the National Code of Local Government Conduct; it advises individual Members on matters of conduct; and advises and makes recommendations to the Council on training for Members on issues of conduct.


This meeting is open to the public and you are welcome to attend.


For further information, or to see the papers, please contact us at the Town Hall:



IN PERSON, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, or

CALL Democratic and Member Services on 01582 546038

An induction loop  facility is available for meetings held in Committee Room 3.

Arrangements can be made for access to meetings for  disabled people.

If you would like us to arrange this for you, please call us on 547149

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

Committee Rooms 1, 2, 4 & Council Chamber:

Turn left, follow the green emergency exit signs to the main town hall entrance and proceed to the assembly point at St George's Square.

Committee Room 3:

Proceed straight ahead through the double doors, follow the green emergency exit signs to the main Town Hall entrance and proceed to the assembly point at St George's Square.

AGENDA

<i>Agenda Item</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	MINUTES	
	1. 11 th September 2017	4 - 6
3.	SECTION 106, LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1992 Those item(s) on the Agenda affected by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 will be identified at the meeting. Any Members so affected is reminded that (s)he should disclose the fact and refrain from voting on those item(s).	
4.	PECUNIARY AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS Members are reminded that they must disclose both the existence and the nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest that they have in any matter to be considered at this meeting unless the interest is a sensitive interest in which event they need not disclose the nature of the interest. A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest must not further participate in any discussion of, vote on, or take any executive steps in relation to the item of business.	

A member with a personal interest, which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgment of the public interest, must similarly not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or take any executive steps in relation to the item of business.

Disclosable pecuniary interests and Personal Interests are defined in the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted members.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair to report on any business which is considered to be urgent and which should be discussed at the meeting in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 and to determine when, during the meeting, any such business should be discussed.

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| 6. | STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17
(Report of the Service Director, HR and Monitoring Officer) | (To Follow) |
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| 7. | COMPLAINTS AGAINSTS MEMBERS
(Oral Report by the Service Director, HR and Monitoring Officer) | Oral Update |
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| 8. | WORK PROGRAMME
(Oral Report by the Service Director, HR and Monitoring Officer) | Oral Update |
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9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, PART VA

To consider whether to pass a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of any item listed above if it is likely that if members of the public were present during those items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information falling within the Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

11th September at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors S. Saleem (Chair), Worthing (Vice Chair), Hussain, Mirza, Moles, Pedersen and R. Saleem.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Ms. P. Brennan, Mrs. M. Briggs, Mr. J Jones and Mr A. Maslen

07 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE (REF: 3)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors M. J. Dolling and Petts.

08 MINUTES (REF: 2(i) & (ii))

Resolved: (i) That, the minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2017, be taken as read subject to Ms P. Brennan be recorded as in attendance at the meeting and not Ms M. Williams be approved as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

(ii) That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2017 be taken as read and approved as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

09 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY – ANNUAL REPORT (REF: 6)

The Service Director, HR and Monitoring Officer presented the Whistleblowing Annual Report which gave an update on the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for the committee to note.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the following key points:

- The number of complaints received during the financial year 2016-17 was twelve which is comparable to the figure for 2015/16.
- The main categories for complaints were:
 - Safeguarding allegations
 - Undeclared data protection breach
 - School leadership mis-management
 - Inappropriate relationship with a contractor
 - Planning application
 - Allegations of bullying

Four allegations were anonymous; one related to bullying, the other three relate to contractor/suppliers breach. Anonymous allegations are hard to investigate and a judgement needs to be made to determine a correlation.

The majority of the allegations relate to safeguarding which in the main relate to private sector care provision. The council has a quality assessment team to carry out inspections who will investigate complaints reported. This does not necessarily mean things are going on in care homes but media attention has led to more at attention focused in this area and an increase in complaints.

The complaint regarding the planning application relates to an allegation made against an officer and Members. An independent investigation was commissioned and the outcome did not lead to anything. The investigation was a lengthy exercise and a cost to the Council.

Councillor Pedersen enquired about the undeclared data protection breach and was advised that related to a member of staff who left sensitive information in an unlocked cabinet. The other allegation related to a school incident where sensitive information was emailed to people it should not have been and the outcome of that investigation determined it was a training issue.

John Jones, Independent Representative enquired whether the policy applied to all council employees and was advised that most organisations were required to have a whistleblowing policy in place. All new employees at the Council receive a copy in their induction pack, and updates to the policy are disseminated through Net Consent which forces council employees to acknowledge receipt and that they have read and understood the policy. The Policy was also on the council's intranet as a reminder. The NSPCC whistleblowing policy which the council also promotes and any procurement contracts with the council are required to have a whistleblowing policy in place.

A supplementary question from John Jones enquired about employees who do not have access to a computer e.g. street cleansing and school crossing patrols and advised that Service Directors within each Directorate on a quarterly basis sign a statement of governance to say all their staff are aware of the whistleblowing policy and sometimes a hard copy is available on the noticeboard for staff to read.

Councillor Pedersen enquired about the process in schools and advised that schools have their own policy in place. Allegations that were made are reported to the Chair of Governor in the first instance and if not satisfied would be passed to the Service Director, HR and Monitoring Officer to pursue. Schools that do not have their own policy in place use the council's policy.

A supplementary question from Cllr Pedersen enquired whether all staff in schools was aware of a whistleblowing policy; and advised that all staff in schools were aware and a duty to train staff on the whistleblowing policy procedure which was a similar process to the Council.

Resolved: (i) That the report (Ref: 6) be noted.

10 COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS (REF: 7)

The Service Director, HR and Monitoring Officer gave an oral update on complaints against members.

The Committee was informed that an adjudication panel held on 22nd June 2017 involved a hearing made against 4 councillors. One of the complaints came from the chief executive department where concern was raised against 4 councillors breaching their equality duty. The investigation was conducted by an external investigator who found there was no breach due to the issue not being related to council business.

The other complaint related to the Development Control Committee where a member of public alleged a councillor had disclosed information that brought the panel into disrepute. An investigation was carried out and dismissed.

There was also one live case where an allegation had been made against a councillor from a member of the public and relates to an external body where the councillor failed to declare an interest. The Service Director was in the process of setting up an assessment panel for this.

Another complaint was received from a member of the public which relates to allegations made involving councillor and officers. The complaint is in regard of an incident that happened at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital where the complainant's father died. The Service Director was in process of setting up an assessment panel for this.

Resolved: That the verbal update be noted.

11 WORK PROGRAMME (REF: 8)

Resolved: (i) That the new data protection regulation be programmed in the work programme for next year.

(ii) That the mandatory policy on committee training and frequency be programmed into the work programme for the 6th February 2018 meeting.

(Meeting ended 6.35pm)