

Standards Committee - Wednesday, 15 March 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on Wednesday, 15 March 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Hyde (Chair), Khurana, Gill and Jackson

Also Present: **Independent Persons** Robert Milne, Luke Rigg.

Councillor Sara Hyde in the Chair

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (ITEM NO. 1)

None.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM NO. 2)

None.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2023 AND RECONVENED ON 18 JANUARY 2023 (ITEM NO. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting on 9 January 2023, reconvened on 18 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

4 GENERAL DISPENSATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (ITEM NO. 4)

The Interim Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer introduced the item, advising it was recommended that all councillors have a general dispensation for those occasions where the interests are shared with a significant proportion of other members and members of the community, to avoid an inadvertent breach of the Code of Conduct for Members. We've tailored the recommended dispensations following a review of best practice amongst a number of other local authorities.

The Committee Members and Independent Persons asked a number of questions and it was concluded that the proposed dispensations struck the right balance between protecting members and transparency.

The Chair moved the item to a vote.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommends that Council agrees the dispensations contained in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of the report, in respect of participation in discussion and voting at meetings, until the annual meeting following the next full local elections.

5 **REVIEW OF THE ISLINGTON CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS (ITEM NO. 5)**

The Interim Director of Law and Governance advised that the Code of Conduct for Members had been updated recently, based on LGA model code, but advised that it is difficult to read and doesn't define interests very clearly. This paper proposes engaging Members more widely about what the Code means in Islington, reviewing the questions raised in a report by the Committee on Standards in Public Life titled "Leading in Practice: A Review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life" (January 2023) and giving the Code of Conduct greater prominence.

The Chair and Committee Members asked a number of questions on the proposed process and it was agreed that questions proposed by the Committee on Standards in Public Life would need to be tailored for councillors.

It was agreed that a report would come back to the Committee in June and that the Independent Persons would be engaged in the development of the Code.

RESOLVED:

That the procedure for reviewing the Code, as outlined in the report, was agreed.

6 **REVIEW OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH STANDARDS ALLEGATIONS (ITEM NO. 6)**

The Chair asked if there were any comments on the contextual information in the report and there was a discussion about the current process and how reliably it was being applied. It was suggested that the proposed new process would give much greater clarity to the roles and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer, the Independent Persons and the Committee.

The procedure appended was reviewed and commented on in detail and it was agreed that a final version would be circulated to the Committee for final comment and approval.

The confidential nature of hearings was discussed and it was agreed that the Committee would determine this on a case by case basis, with the intention of progressing to holding hearings in public.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Procedure as set out in Appendix B, be approved, subject to final amendments being agreed.

MEETING CLOSED AT 6.57 pm

Chair