

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr D Borthwick – Chairman

Cllr D Kelsey – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr M Andrews, Cllr L Northover and Cllr V Ricketts and Independent Persons, Mr P Cashmore and Mr I Sibley

12. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Jones.

Councillor A Filer was present at the meeting on a virtual basis (without entitlement to vote).

13. Substitute Members

There were no appointed substitute members.

14. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

15. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 05 July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

16. Public Issues

There were no public issues.

17. Code of Conduct Complaints – Review

The Committee received the regular schedule of completed and ongoing complaints against Councillors with cases shown as closed in the previous report removed from the list.

The adopted arrangements for dealing with allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct were set out. These included the arrangements for initial assessment by the Monitoring Officer and the process for determination of complaints by the Chair of the Standards Committee in consultation with Councillors of the Standards Committee and the Independent Persons.

The Committee reviewed the table of complaints setting out, in each case, the nature of the complaint and, where applicable, the Monitoring Officer's

assessment, the decision of the Chair and the current status of the complaint.

The Committee noted delay in processing complaints due to issues around resourcing and capacity although it was reported that this was now being addressed through establishment of regular and scheduled meetings with the Chairman to facilitate consultation. The Committee was aware that a consultation meeting had taken place on the day prior to the Committee which had resulted in the resolution of some additional complaints listed.

Members underlined the importance of ensuring that Councillors responded promptly to complaints and this was something that would need to feature in training for all Councillors after the elections in May 2023. This would include explaining that that Councillors needed to take very seriously the process of dealing with and responding to complaints.

Although there would not be the opportunity to arrange refresher training in the period before the elections, the importance of the Councillor complaints process could be re-enforced in meetings with Political Group Leaders.

In terms of the formal process, the Committee was informed that the Council had discretion to set its own internal timescales for requiring responses to complaints and after discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the Chair of the Committee write to the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee requesting the Constitution Review Working Group to consider and review the provisions within the Constitution which specify timeframes in which Councillors are required to respond to complaints against them.

18. Code of Conduct Complaint - BCP110

The Chairman advised the Committee that this item would not now be considered at the meeting as the complaint had already been determined and the complainant would be notified of the decision within the next few days.

Members of the Committee provided assurance that all the evidence around the complaint had been carefully and seriously considered and that in so doing full due process had been given to consideration of the complaint.

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 28 February 2023 at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 6.22 pm

CHAIRMAN