

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2021 at 6.30 pm

Present:-

Cllr D Butt – Chairman

Cllr D Borthwick – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr M Andrews, Cllr J J Butt, Cllr L Northover, Cllr V Ricketts and
Cllr L Williams (In place of Cllr A M Stribley)

Also in attendance: Paul Cashmore, Independent Person

18. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Stribley and Paul Sibley.

19. Substitute Members

Councillor Williams substituted for Councillor Stribley.

20. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest received on this occasion.

21. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 October 2021, having previously been circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

22. Public Issues

No public issues had been received on this occasion.

23. Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman advised that this item would be considered next on the Agenda before potentially going in to exempt session.

The Chairman advised that the proposed date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 1 February 2022.

There was an extensive discussion over the start time of the Committee, and it was clarified that historically Standards Committee had commenced

at 6pm. The Chairman requested a later start time of 6:30pm to enable working Committee Members to have time to travel to the meeting.

A proposal for the Committee to commence at 6pm, on being put to the vote was lost and therefore a start time of 6:30pm was agreed.

24. Exclusion of Press and Public

The Monitoring Officer introduced the item and recommended that the Standards Committee go into exempt session.

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.

Voting – For – Unanimous.

25. Consideration of Report in Respect of Complaint about a Councillor - BCP-039

The Independent Investigator presented their report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and was appended to the covering report, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided the Standards Committee with the conclusions of the investigation following a complaint made about a Councillor of BCP Council under reference BCP-039. The Investigator's report was attached at Appendix 1. The Investigator concluded that there were two grounds with sufficient evidence to uphold the complaint.

The Committee was asked to consider the Investigator's report. Committee Members questioned the Investigator regarding points of clarification and accuracy.

In response to a concern raised, the Committee was advised of the reasons why the Investigator did not feel it was appropriate or necessary to have a meeting with the complainant.

The Independent Investigator left the meeting whilst the Committee considered the Recommendations.

The Committee considered the Recommendations and discussed possible sanctions for non-compliance. There was some discussion over the timescales for the commencement of the 14 day period and it was felt appropriate to start it on the first working day of 2022.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the findings of the independent investigator that the subject councillor breached the Council's Code of Conduct on the grounds of failing to show respect and bullying the complainant be accepted;**
- (b) the subject councillor be requested to furnish the complainant with a letter of apology;**
- (c) should the subject councillor fail to provide a suitable letter of apology referred to in (b) above within 14 days from 4 January 2022, then a report of non-compliance be presented to full council.**

Vote: For - Unanimous.

26. Consideration of Report in Respect of Complaint about a Councillor - BCP-040

The Independent Investigator presented their report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and was appended to the covering report, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided the Standards Committee with the conclusions of the investigation following a complaint made about a Councillor of BCP Council under reference BCP-040. The investigator's report was attached at Appendix 1. The investigator concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support the allegations.

Committee Members questioned the Investigator regarding points of clarification.

In response to a concern raised, the Committee was again advised of the reasons why the Investigator did not feel it was appropriate or necessary to have a meeting with the complainant.

The Independent Investigator left the meeting whilst the Committee considered the Recommendations.

The Committee discussed the recommendations and considered the second recommendation first, detailed below:

The Committee consider whether to instruct the investigator to further report on the complaint of "failing to treat others with respect".

Following advice of the Independent Investigator and not wishing to undermine the decisions of the previous Chairman of Standards Committee, the Committee felt it was not appropriate to instruct the

investigator to further report on the complaint of “failing to treat others with respect”.

RESOLVED that the findings and recommendations of the independent investigator be accepted.

Voting: For - Unanimous

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

CHAIRMAN