

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr V Ricketts – Chairman

Cllr A Chapmanlaw – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr M Andrews (In place of Cllr R Maidment), Cllr J Challinor (In place of Cllr M Haines), Cllr E Connolly, Cllr B Nanovo and Cllr O Walters

Also in attendance virtually: Mr I Sibley and Mr P Cashmore (Independent Persons)
Cllr R Maidment

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors

2. Substitute Members

Councillor Challinor substituted for Councillor Haines and Councillor Andrews substituted for Councillor Maidment.

3. Election of Chair

In accordance with the Constitution Meeting Procedure Rules the Chairman of the Council presided over the meeting for this item.

A nomination was received and seconded for Councillor Vanessa Ricketts. No further nominations were received.

RESOLVED that Councillor Vanessa Ricketts be elected as Chair of the Standards Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

Voting: Unanimous

4. Election of Vice-Chair

The Chair of the Standards Committee presided over this item and sought nominations for Vice Chair.

A nomination was received and seconded for Councillor Adrian Chapmanlaw. No further nominations were received.

RESOLVED that Councillor Adrian Chapmanlaw be elected Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

Voting: Unanimous

5. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest received on this occasion.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7. Public Issues

The Chair advised that no petitions or statements had been received on this occasion but that three questions had been received by a member of the public.

Question from Alex McKinstry on Agenda Item 8

Question 1.

I see from Table 1 in tonight's report that complaint no. 97 (BCP-097) is still unresolved. Those who followed Standards Committee meetings earlier this year will recall how the councillor involved in this complaint overlooked three related letters or emails (dating back to 15 September), and then introduced "fresh evidence" when they did reply on 27 February. A "further determination" was made on 13 March, in the light of this new evidence; but Table 1 suggests that the complaint remains upheld, and that once again, the Committee is awaiting a reply from the subject councillor. Is this correct, and if so can we have an update on what has happened with this complaint since 13 March?

Response by Ingrid Brown, Head of Legal Services

In response to Question 1, this matter remains live and is still at the informal stage of the process. It is referred to in the report to be considered by the committee which has not yet been considered or accepted. I am in correspondence with the subject Councillor and in the event of the absence of a response from the Councillor within a reasonable time, a report will be presented to the next meeting of formal standards.

Question from Alex McKinstry on Agenda Item 8

Question 2.

Just to clarify, have all three allegations in Complaint BCP-097 been upheld?

Response by Ingrid Brown, Head of Legal Services

In response to question 2, the entire complaint was upheld by the Chair, after consultation with the members of Standards Committee, the Independent Persons and the Monitoring Officer.

Question from Alex McKinstry on Agenda Item 8

Question 3.

Complaint no. 132 (BCP-132) attracted much interest, involving as it did six breaches of the code of conduct by Cllr. Mark Anderson, and his

subsequent resignation from Cabinet. That complaint is now marked "Determined"; but at the summing-up on 28 February, this Committee said it would be asking the Chief Executive to carry out a separate investigation into "areas of concern" that it had identified. My question is: can we, the public, be told anything about that investigation at this stage? (Even basic information, such as whether the investigation has started yet; what its precise terms of reference are; what its timescales are; whether it will be reporting back to this Committee; etc., etc.)

Response by Ingrid Brown, Head of Legal Services

In response to Question 3 I am able to confirm that the Committee shared its further areas of concern with the chief executive. These matters remain confidential.

8. Code of Conduct Complaints - Review

The Head of Legal Services presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided Members with an update on complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct against councillors received or concluded since the last report to the Committee in

The Committee was reminded that it was responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct by Members of BCP Council and the Town and Parish Councils, monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct and considering the outcome of commissioned independent investigations.

RESOLVED that the outcome of concluded complaints and the progress of those still outstanding be noted.

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting ended at 6.23 pm

CHAIRMAN