

## North Yorkshire County Council

### Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 6 March 2020 at 10 am at No. 1 Racecourse Lane, Northallerton, DL7 8QZ.

**Present:-**

County Councillors Caroline Patmore (Chairman), Andy Paraskos, Stuart Parsons, Peter Sowray and Cliff Trotter together with Independent Persons for Standards Hilary Gilbertson MBE and Louise Holroyd.

County Councillor Michael Harrison was in attendance for Item 5.

**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

**48. Minutes**

**Resolved -**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2019, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**49. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from Members at this stage of the meeting.

**50. Public Questions or Statements**

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

**51. Local Ethical Framework Developments**

Considered -

The report of the Monitoring Officer updating Members on the development of the Ethical Framework under the Localism Act 2011.

The report informed Members that the Local Government Association (LGA) has commenced reviewing the model Code of Conduct for Members, ahead of the Government's response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's (CSPL) Review of Local Government Standards. The LGA anticipates the new draft model Code of Conduct being published for consultation during March 2020, with consultation closing towards the end of April. The LGA intends to launch the new model Code at its conference on 30 June 2020.

The report also provided a summary of the following, with links to the full reports provided:-

- Committee on Standards in Public Life – Open Letter to Public Office Holders
- Committee on Standards in Public Life – short films re Principles of Public Life

- Committee on Standards in Public Life – Intimidation in Public life
- Local Government Association – Councillors’ Guide to Handling Intimidation
- Cabinet Office – Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies
- Committee on Standards in Public Life – Report on Artificial Intelligence and Public Standards

**Resolved -**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**52. Dispensations Granted**

Considered -

The report of the Monitoring Officer informing Members about dispensations granted to County Councillor Arthur and County Councillor Harrison by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers and asking Members to review the dispensation to Councillor Harrison.

The Committee noted that on 23 October 2019, a dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer, under delegated powers, to County Councillor Karl Arthur, to enable him to speak, vote and be included within the quorum at meetings of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the Committee is considering business relating to Passenger Rail Updates, until the date of the next local government elections in 2021.

The Committee noted that on 18 February 2020, a dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer, under delegated powers, to County Councillor Michael Harrison, to enable him to speak, vote and be included within the quorum at meetings of the Council, Executive and committees when they are considering business relating to Treasury Management, until the date of the next local government elections in 2021. Prior to granting the dispensation, whilst the Monitoring Officer was liaising with the available Standards Committee Members and Independent Persons a request was made for this dispensation to be considered in more detail and reviewed at the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

County Councillor Harrison attended for this Item to speak to his dispensation application in more detail. The Committee was grateful to Councillor Harrison for clarification of his precise role for his employer and that he has no connection to any part of the organisation dealing with any form of lending or treasury functions. The Committee agreed that the dispensation should continue.

**Resolved -**

- (i) That the dispensations granted by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers be noted.
- (ii) That the dispensation granted to County Councillor Harrison by the Monitoring Officer should continue.

**53. Complaints Update**

Considered -

The report of the Monitoring Officer updating the Committee regarding Ethical Framework complaint activity.

It was noted that there had been three new complaints received since the last complaints update report to the Committee.

Details of the complaints were provided including the results of the assessments undertaken. It was noted that two of the complaints had arisen from the same issue against the same County Councillor.

The statistical information relating to standards complaint activity was noted.

**Resolved -**

That the current position on complaints received be noted;

**54. Standards Bulletin**

Considered -

The report of the Monitoring Officer presenting to the Committee, for consideration, a draft of the latest Standards Bulletin.

The latest draft of the Bulletin was attached at Appendix 1. The Committee was requested to consider whether any alterations were required to the Bulletin before it was circulated.

The Senior Governance Lawyer, in presenting the report, highlighted that the Bulletin was circulated to other local authorities at their request.

The Committee agreed it would be helpful to shorten the hyperlinks included in the Bulletin and to re-order the items in the Bulletin so that the standing advice items such as Members' Expenses, Members' Attendance, the Interests' Regime, Sensitive Interests, Bias, Predetermination and Predisposition, Members' Gifts and Hospitality and national standards cases were brought forward in the Bulletin.

**Resolved -**

That, subject to the amendments discussed, the Bulletin be approved for circulation.

The meeting concluded at 10.55 am.

MPB