

Agenda Item 3

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

25 FEBRUARY 2016

(7.15 pm - 7.37 pm)

PRESENT Councillor Peter McCabe (in the Chair),
Councillor David Williams, Councillor Mary-Jane Jeanes,
Councillor Philip Jones, Councillor Ian Munn, Councillor Russell
Makin

CO-OPTED MEMBER Sophie Bowen

ALSO PRESENT Paul Evans - Assistant Director of Corporate Governance
Lisa Jewell – Democratic Services

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Najeeb Latif who was replaced by Councillor Adam Bush.

Apologies were received from both Independent Members : Suresh Patel and Derek Prior

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were declarations of Pecuniary Interest made by Members

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

Members commented on the appendix (Appendix 1, Item 07 – Gifts and Hospitality Register for LBM Officers), missing from the agenda of 21 October 2015, and now attached to the minutes. The Committee was reminded that the Gifts and Hospitality register for Members, names the Member and only lists items over the value of £25. It was noted that the LBM Officers' register does not name the officer and does list items with values less than £25. Members asked if the inclusion of low value items diminished the process and also if officers should be named.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance explained that the Officers' Register was held within each directorate whereas the Members' Register was held by Democratic Services and so it was less easy to achieve consistency across the Officers' register. However, it was acceptable and desirable for officers to declare any gift they were given, even if low value. The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance did agree that Senior Officers should be named, and that there should be greater consistency in the way that gifts, especially those with a value of over £25, be recorded. Accordingly, he agreed to write to each directorate to give them additional guidance.

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2015 were agreed as a correct record

4 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS AND INDEPENDENT NON-VOTING CO -OPTED MEMBERS (Agenda Item 4)

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance presented his report on the appointment of independent persons and independent non-voting co-opted members. The Committee noted that there was no statutory requirement to appoint co-opted members and it was for The Standards Committee to recommend to Council on whether to appoint a third member when the term of office of the current third member expires in June 2016.

The Committee discussed the report and concluded that they did value the role of the independent members on the Standards Committee but that two such members would be adequate. The Committee noted the contribution that independent members past and present had made to the work of the Committee.

During the discussion it was suggested that it was unnecessary for Standards Committee to meet regularly as most of the business it considers could be sent to the General Purposes Committee, with the Standards Committee and its independent members meeting only to consider complaints against members.

The Committee thanked Sophie Bowen for her commitment to the Standards Committee, which was greatly valued.

RESOLVED

- A. That the Standards Committee have agreed to combine the role of the independent person and the independent non voting co opted members so that the two independent persons appointed from 12 July 2015 will also become invited members of the Standards Committee.
- B. That the Standards Committee reviewed the arrangement and decided to recommend to Council that they did not appoint a third co-opted member when the term of office of the current third member expires.

5 COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS (Agenda Item 5)

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance reported that no complaints against members had been received.

6 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (Agenda Item 6)

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance presented the report on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Authorisations. The Committee noted that RIPA authorisations have fallen off since the transfer of benefits administration to DWP. The Committee were pleased to note that following their request at the previous meeting prosecutions for fly tipping were now receiving greater publicity. The Committee expressed their thanks and encouragement to the relevant teams for their continued efforts in prosecuting and publicising fly tipping offences.

RESOLVED

The Standards Committee noted the purposes for which investigations have been authorised under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000.

7 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 7)

The Committee noted the Work Programme for 2016/2017

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