

Agenda Item 3

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

18 JUNE 2013

(19:15 TO 19:55)

PRESENT: Councillors: Peter McCabe (in the chair), John Dehaney, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Philip Jones, Ian Munn, Henry Nelles and David Williams.

Co-opted members: Nigel Brotherton

Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services), Paul Evans (Monitoring Officer, Assistant Director of Corporate Governance), Karin Lane (Head of Information Governance) and Colin Millar (Democracy Services)

ALSO PRESENT: Sophie Bowen

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda item 1)

None were made

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda item 2)

None were received

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY 2013 (Agenda item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2013 are agreed as a correct record.

4 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2012/13 UPDATE (Agenda item 4)

Officers discussed the report with members

- The level of use of investigations was still low although there were initiatives taking place in respect of underage alcohol sales, housing benefits fraud and fly-tipping which would mean that a steady level of investigative work was maintained.
- There are processes in place with the magistrates court which enable applications to be dealt with in a timely fashion, including urgent applications – officers normally only use covert surveillance or interception of communications data after they have tried other investigative approaches which have not been successful.
- There was some joint work going ahead with LB Croydon on recovering money from fraudulent housing benefits claims under proceeds of crime provisions.

The report was noted.

5 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012/13 (Agenda item 5)

Officers discussed the report with members:

1

All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the committee/panel. To find out the date of the next meeting please check the calendar of events at your local library or online at www.merton.gov.uk/committee.

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- Merton did work with other boroughs in various activities and applied lessons for governance where appropriate. However, it was important that Merton's governance model also reflected local requirements;
- Internal audit benefitted from working with other organisations in specialist areas and from outside the public sector;
- Internal audit was working more to a risk based approach and looked at major cross-cutting work such as procurement;
- Caroline Holland pointed out that none of the outstanding actions on the annual audit report at page 33 were overdue – members asked to have overdue actions identified in future reports;
- Simon Williams as chair of the procurement board had attended General Purposes Committee in March to address the procurement issue at paragraph 3.7 of the annual audit report;
- In respect of paragraph 7.2 of the annual audit report the internal audit team role was to ensure that systems and procedures were robust, individual cases would also be investigated and pursued as appropriate by the investigations team;
- Merton had considered all of the options for the Director of Public Health role and had decided not to proceed with a shared service approach;

RESOLVED: That the Annual Governance Statement is agreed

6 COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS (Agenda item 6)

No complaints have been received since the last meeting

7 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 7)

Code of conduct training for new members following 2014 election to be added to February 2014 meeting.