

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Friday, 29 November 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at Chairman's Room 1, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 29 November 2013 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Oliver Lodge (Deputy Chairman)
Nigel Challis
Revd Dr Martin Dudley
Alan Graham (External Member)
Alderman Julian Malins

Officers:

Lorraine Brook	- Town Clerk's Department
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller & City Solicitor
Edward Wood	- Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department

Neil Asten (Independent Person) was also present at the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy Robin Eve, Edward Lord (Chairman), Anju Sanahi and Chris Taylor.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th September 2013 were approved as an accurate record.

Matters arising

AOB- Internal Mechanisms (page 2)

In response to a query, Members were advised that dates were not yet confirmed in respect of which future meetings of the Committee the Chief Commoner and the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee would attend.

4. MINUTES OF THE DISPENSATIONS SUB (STANDARDS) COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Dispensations Sub Committee which met on 11th November 2013.

RECEIVED.

5. **EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Director of Human Resources, Chrissie Morgan, provided the Committee with an overview of the Employee Code of Conduct which, following its revision in 2012 to incorporate legislative changes associated with the Bribery Act (2010) was approved by the Establishment Committee on 27th September 2012. Given the Standards Committee's remit to "keep[ing] under review and monitor[ing] City of London Corporation's Employee Code of Conduct", Members were invited to comment on the existing Code.

With reference to the Code and the various policies referred to therein, it was noted that the separate policies had not been included within the Code in order to keep the document as streamlined as possible, for ease of future revision and on the basis that all relevant documents were easily accessible by all employees on-line.

A query was raised regarding the Member/Officer Protocol and its relationship with the Employee Code of Conduct and clarification sought as to whether the Protocol should be referenced in some way within the Employee Code of Conduct (i.e. Part 5). The Town Clerk undertook to explore the existence of the Member/Officer Protocol and to liaise further with the Director of HR in respect of referencing the Protocol within the Employee Code of Conduct.

The Director of HR confirmed that the Committee would be advised in the future as and when changes to the Employee Code of Conduct were proposed and the document would also be submitted to the Committee for an annual review, as per the Committee's terms of reference.

6. **AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - MANDATORY REGISTRATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Town Clerk and the Comptroller & City Solicitor relative to the introduction of a mandatory regime for all Members of the Court of Common Council and Co-opted Members in respect of the registration of gifts and hospitality. At its previous meeting on 13th September 2013, the Committee had agreed that as the voluntary regime for registering gifts and hospitality (to the value of £250 and above, or cumulative gifts and hospitality to the value of £500 and above from a single source over a 12 month period) was not resulting in appropriate registrations being made, a mandatory regime should be introduced. In order to replicate all of the provisions of the existing voluntary scheme for registration of gifts and hospitality in a mandatory scheme, including the registration of gifts and hospitality within 28 days of receipt, amendments to the Code of Conduct were required, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report before Members.

The Committee was also asked to note the amended DCLG "guide for Councillors" regarding openness and transparency and its revised "illustrative Code of Conduct" on which the City Corporation's Code of Conduct was largely based.

A number of revisions were proposed in respect of the revised Code of Conduct, principally in respect of including reference to professional memberships, removing inconsistencies in the document and ensuring that the

document appropriately reflected the City of London Corporation's arrangements. It was agreed that an updated version of the document, incorporating those suggestions put forward by Members, be submitted for further consideration by the Committee at its meeting on 31st January 2014. The Committee further agreed that, given the differing views that were likely to be generated by the introduction of a mandatory gifts and hospitality regime in the future, the matter should first be raised informally amongst Members. The Chief Commoner would therefore be asked to raise the matter at the informal meeting of the Court of Common Council, which was scheduled to take place on 13th February 2014.

RESOLVED: - That –

- (i) the proposed Code of Conduct be further revised to incorporate the comments of the Standards Committee and submitted to the next meeting on 31st January 2014 for further consideration;
- (ii) the Standards Committee note the amended DCLG “guide for councillors”; and
- (iii) the Chief Commoner be asked by the Chairman of the Standards Committee to raise the matter of a revised Code of Conduct, incorporating a mandatory registration regime for gifts and hospitality (one-off gifts and hospitality to the value of £250 or more, and cumulative gifts and hospitality to the value of £500 or more from a single donor in a financial year), at the next informal meeting of the Court of Common Council on 13th February 2014.

7. **APPOINTMENTS - CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk relevant to the appointment of Co-opted Members on the Standards Committee. It was noted that the appointment process had been underway since September 2013 and, following two recruitment campaigns, four applications had been considered by the Selection Panel as well as an application for re-appointment by Ms Felicity Lusk. The Committee noted the proposed appointment of Ms Judith Barnes and Ms Felicity Lusk which would be considered by the Court of Common Council on 5th December 2013.

In noting that only two appointments were to be made in the near future and that in addition to the outstanding vacancy, a new vacancy would arise upon Mr Alan Graham's term of office expiring in February 2014, the Committee considered how the vacancies should be managed. It was agreed that as the previous recruitment campaigns had resulted in limited public interest, alternative recruitment methods should be progressed in the New Year in order to secure the appointment of new Co-opted Members at the earliest opportunity. Consequently, the positions would be advertised on the City of London webpages only but, once the vacancies went out to advert, the Livery Committee would be alerted to the vacancies in order to raise wide-spread awareness about the role of the Co-opted Members on the Committee and the current vacancies. It was further suggested that if the Co-opted Members that were currently appointed to serve on the Audit and Risk Management were also interested in serving on the Standards Committee, they should be encouraged to submit their expressions of interest to the Selection Panel within the agreed

recruitment deadlines. On that basis, the Co-opted Members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee would also be advised about the vacancies once the recruitment campaign commenced.

RESOLVED: - That –

- (i) the Standards Committee note the recommended appointment of Ms Judith Barnes and Ms Felicity Lusk as Co-opted Members of the Standards Committee, subject to approval by the Court of Common Council on 5th December 2013; and
- (ii) the recruitment and selection of two further Co-opted Members of the Standards Committee commence as soon as possible and the Standards Committee be updated at its meeting on 31st January 2014 regarding the appointment arrangements; and
- (iii) the Co-opted Members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the Members of the Livery Committee be advised about the Co-opted Member vacancies once the recruitment campaign has commenced.

8. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were none.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

The meeting ended at 2.58 pm

Chairman

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