

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Standards Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2015
<b>Subject:</b> Complaints Process Review	<b>Public</b>
<b>Joint report of:</b> The Town Clerk and The Comptroller & City Solicitor	<b>For Decision</b>
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>At the meeting of the Standards Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015, Members received a report setting out the current complaints procedure and the governance arrangements in respect of the Sub Committees that are constituted to consider any alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct. The report had been specifically requested by the Committee in February 2015 and invited Members to consider and comment on the current complaints process.</p> <p>In reviewing the existing procedure and accompanying form at their 15<sup>th</sup> May meeting, Members proposed several amendments to the existing complaints procedure and complaints form (alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct) and requested that the Town Clerk and the Comptroller &amp; City Solicitor further review these and submit revised documentation to the next meeting of the Standards Committee for further consideration.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>Members are asked to approve the revised documentation and to note the existing arrangements in respect of responding to and managing alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct.</p>	

## Main Report

### Background

1. At the meeting of the Standards Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2015, following a discussion about the Committee's terms of reference and frequency of future meetings, Members requested a review of the current complaints procedure in respect of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by the City Corporation's Members and Co-opted Members.
2. A report outlining current arrangements and the background to these was submitted to the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015 meeting of the Standards Committee. Appended to this was the Complaints Procedure (How Complaints Submitted To The City Of London's Standards Committee Will Be Dealt With) and the existing Complaints Form.
4. During discussion at the 15<sup>th</sup> May meeting, some further revisions to both the Form and the Procedure were requested. The Chairman suggested that the

procedure should make greater reference to the Chief Commoner and the Chairman of the Privileges Committee of Aldermen and the existing internal mechanisms to manage Members' behaviour. He further suggested that the procedure should also clarify the opportunities for Members to appeal against the imposition of any sanctions by the Chief Commoner or the Chairman of the Privileges Committee of Aldermen such as the removal of hospitality privileges.

5. Members noted that, whilst it was recognised that the complaints form should not be too legalistic, it was suggested that it be revised to invite people to specify which paragraphs of the Code of Conduct had allegedly been breached. Contact details of those who manage the complaints process should also be included.
6. Further comments were made in respect of the role of the Independent Person/s and it was suggested that the role should be outlined in the introduction of the procedure. With regard to the complainant type list within the procedure, the Town Clerk and the Comptroller & City Solicitor were requested to review the list and propose suitable revisions.

### **Current Position**

7. All Members were invited to examine the procedure further outside of the meeting and feed-back comments to officers although no additional comments were received.
8. The revisions requested by the Standards Committee, together with some further changes considered beneficial by the Comptroller & City Solicitor, are reflected in the amended version of the complaints procedure which is attached for the Committee's approval.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

9. The Standards Committee's complaints procedure clearly sets out the City of London Corporation's arrangements for the management of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by Members and Co-opted Members and ensures that the organisation's governance framework is robust and transparent.

### **Conclusion**

10. It is important that the City Corporation has a robust and transparent governance framework of which the Complaints Procedure is one aspect. Members are therefore invited to review and comment on the existing procedure.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Complaints Procedure (How Complaints Submitted To The City Of London's Standards Committee Will Be Dealt With)

### **Background Papers**

*Report and minutes - Standards Committee, 23 November 2012*

*Report and minutes – Standards Committee, 15 May 2015*

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