

Report – Standards Committee

Independent Review of Standards Framework

To be presented on Thursday, 21st July 2016

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY

In light of the comments expressed by Members at the meeting of the Court of Common Council on 23 June 2016 about the content of the Committee's annual report, specifically in respect of a complaint addressed by your Standards Committee, it was agreed that the report should be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

Having given the matter careful and detailed consideration, this report now informs the Court of our decisions to:

- a) re-submit the annual report to the Court this day, without the Member concerned in the complaint being named; and
- b) commission an independent broadly-based review of the arrangements currently in place for addressing matters connected with the conduct of Members (including co-opted Members) under the Localism Act 2011.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. At the meeting of the Court of Common Council on 23 June 2016, concerns were expressed by a number of Members about the content of the Standards Committee's annual report, principally around the identification of the Member involved in the report about a particular complaint and the Committee's general handling of that complaint. This led to a decision by the Court to refer the report back to the Standards Committee for further consideration.

Proposals

2. In light of the concerns raised, your Committee has given the matter further and more detailed consideration and has determined to re-submit its annual report to the Court without naming the individual Member concerned with the complaint. The original report has been withdrawn from publication on the City Corporation's website and the revised annual report is an item on the Court's agenda this day.
3. To ensure that the City Corporation's standards framework remains fit for purpose and that Members have full confidence in the arrangements, the

Committee has taken the decision to commission an independent review of the arrangements currently in place for addressing matters connected with the conduct of Members under the Localism Act 2011.

4. The Localism Act 2011 requires the City Corporation to promote and maintain high standards of conduct, the adoption of local codes of conduct and grants local responsibility for investigating alleged breaches of those codes including those in respect of the registration and disclosure of pecuniary and other interests.
5. The review will be undertaken by a suitably qualified person, identified and appointed by the Town Clerk, with the findings being reported to the Court by December 2016. We also propose to consult all Members informally on the findings prior to their submission to the Court in December.
6. The proposed review will be broad in its remit and will examine the arrangements the City Corporation currently has in place for addressing matters connected with the conduct of Members (including co-opted Members) under the Localism Act 2011 with particular focus on the Complaints Procedure (alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct). It is the Committee's particular intention that this should be a broad and independent review so that the City Corporation's responsibilities under the Act, fulfilled by your Standards Committee in accordance with the Terms of Reference set out by the Court, can be further considered. Through the proposed consultation process, Members' input will be sought and will form an important part of this process.

Conclusion

7. In light of the concerns expressed at the Court meeting on 23 June, your Committee has decided that a broad, independent review of the current arrangements should be undertaken by a suitably qualified person, identified and appointed by the Town Clerk, and to report back to the Court by December 2016.
8. Your Standards Committee today re-submits its annual report.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 8th July 2016.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Oliver Arthur Wynlane Lodge
Chairman, Standards Committee