

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Friday, 6 October 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd
Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 6 October 2017 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Oliver Lodge (Chairman)
Christopher Hayward (Deputy Chairman)
Chris Boden
Alderman David Graves
Mark Greenburgh
Ann Holmes
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Deputy Edward Lord

Independent Persons:

Neil Asten
Chris Taylor

Officers:

Michael Cogher	- Comptroller and City Solicitor
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Martin Newton	- Town Clerk's Department
Tracey Jansen	- Town Clerk's Department
William Chapman	- Private Secretary and Chief of Staff

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Judith Barnes, Dan Large and Anju Sanehi (Independent Person).

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

Alderman David Graves, Ann Holmes and Deputy Edward Lord declared interests in item 5 (Dispensations in relation to the setting of council tax) insofar as they pay council tax in the City of London.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2017 be approved as a correct record, subject to amendments to the final paragraph of page 1 to refer to 'Item 6 (Minutes of the Previous Meeting)' and to Item 4 on page 2 to include 'Nigel Challis' in the list of Members thanked by the Chairman that were stepping down from the Committee.

Matters Arising

Minute 7 – Standards Regime Review Working Party

- The Comptroller and City Solicitor informed the Committee that the Working Party had met this week for the final scheduled time and that officers were now re-drafting the relevant documents based on the proposed recommendations. He indicated that the recommendations were not radically different from those suggested by Mr Bourne, although the Working Party favoured the introduction of an independent committee comprised of senior Members to consider appeals, and considered that a complainant should also have a right to appeal. The Comptroller and City Solicitor said that it was the intention of the Chairman of the Working Party that briefing sessions be convened for all Members prior to the recommendations going before the Court of Common Council in December.

Discussion took place on the most appropriate way forward for the Standards Committee to further engage with the drafting process during which a Member made the point that, should the Working Party's views be different to that of the independent adviser engaged by the Corporation and be considered unreasonable by Members, then amendments to the recommendations may be moved at the Court of Common Council when the matter is discussed there. The Committee also noted the tight timescale for further engagement.

At the conclusion of debate, the Chairman undertook to contact the Chairman of the Working Party regarding the possibility of the Committee hearing about the Working Party's proposals at a special meeting, to help ensure that any significant debate should be identified well before the formal Court of Common Council deliberation on the matter.

Minute 8 – Code of Conduct / Protocol Training

- It was noted that the Comptroller and City Solicitor had confirmed that he could arrange additional Code of Conduct training sessions and the Chairman said that he would write to all recently elected Members that had not so far attended a training session.

Minute 10 – Requests for Dispensation

- A Co-opted Member said that he felt more information was needed when considering requests for dispensations. The Chairman noted that officers had already undertaken to provide covering reports for such requests going forwards, as recorded in the minutes of the previous meeting. The Co-opted Member also raised again the issue of Barbican residents that were Members of the Barbican Residential Committee and the potential for conflicts of interest.

After further discussion on this and related issues, the Chairman asked that the Comptroller and City Solicitor provide a report to a future meeting in relation to the Barbican Residential Committee, with the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee to be advised of this

course of action in relation to the Standards Committee's concerns regarding potential for conflicts of interest of Members who have an interest in property on the Barbican Estate and who serve on the Barbican Residential Committee.

4. **UPDATE- ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk that, on Wednesday 20 September, the Assessment Sub (Standards) Committee had considered the details of a complaint made against a Member of the Court of Common Council. The Committee were informed that, following consideration of all relevant matters, the Assessment Sub (Standards) Committee had agreed that no further action should be taken in respect of the complaint.

RECEIVED.

5. **DISPENSATIONS IN RELATION TO THE SETTING OF COUNCIL TAX**

The Committee received a report of the Comptroller and City Solicitor on dispensations in relation to the setting of council tax.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED – That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Standards Committee, to determine dispensations received from Members in order to speak or vote on the setting of council tax where they have a home within the City.

6. **THE LORD MAYOR'S DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

With the agreement of the Chairman, the Committee received a late report of the Private Secretary and Chief of Staff on the declaration of gifts and hospitality in relation to the special provision made for the Lord Mayor as a ceremonial office holder.

The following matter was raised:-

- The Private Secretary and Chief of Staff stated that the annual report records all details of gifts, but that some further details of hospitality received by the Lord Mayor had inadvertently been omitted and that details of these would be circulated to Members.

RECEIVED.

7. **SHRIEVAL REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

With the agreement of the Chairman, the Committee received a late report of the Secondary of London presenting the updated position of gifts and hospitality received by the Sheriffs of the City of London for the year 2016/17.

The following matter was raised:-

- It was suggested that it may be appropriate to provide a single report containing details of both the Lord Mayor's and the Sheriffs' gifts and hospitality received in future, or separate reports in the same format.

RECEIVED.

8. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE PROTOCOL ON MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONS

The Committee received a report of the Director of Human Resources on the annual review of the Protocol on Member / Officer Relations 2016/17.

The following matters were raised:-

- The Chairman referred to two issues – firstly, how allegations of a breach of the Protocol should be dealt with where the individual then declines to make a complaint; and secondly, the need for the Committee to have before them a copy of the Employee Code of Conduct in considering the paper.
- The Chairman suggested that, as the report before them did not currently cover these matters then consideration of the paper should be deferred in order for an updated report to be submitted by the Director of Human Resources at the next meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Committee receive an updated report at their next meeting, to include comment on allegations of a breach of the Protocol where the individual then declines to make a complaint and for Members to have before them a copy of the Employee Code of Conduct.

9. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on action taken between meetings under Standing Order 41.

It was noted that this action taken was consistent with decisions taken by the Standards Committee in May 2017.

RECEIVED.

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

The Chairman raised the issue of the late receipt of meeting papers and the Town Clerk confirmed that these concerns were noted.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 12.17 pm

Chairman

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