

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2020

CONFIDENTIAL

By virtue of paragraph 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

15. NON-PUBLIC SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Chair highlighted that these items were to receive only and that decision letters had now been provided at the express request of this Committee, as set out in the non-public minutes of the meeting of 1 May 2020.

a) **ASSESSMENT SUB (STANDARDS) COMMITTEE - 31 JULY 2020**

The Committee received the non-public minutes and relating decision letters of the Assessment Sub (Standards) Committee meeting held virtually on 31 July 2020.

RECEIVED.

b) **ASSESSMENT SUB (STANDARDS) COMMITTEE - 3 SEPTEMBER 2020**

The Committee received the non-public minutes and relating decision letter of the Assessment Sub (Standards) Committee meeting held virtually on 3 September 2020.

A Co-opted Member, also the subject of this complaint, referred to the decision reached and commented that she felt that, on the basis of the papers before the Committee, this was seriously flawed and did not provide any reasons for the conclusion reached unlike the decision letters from the other Assessment Sub Committee meeting. The Chair reiterated that these papers were for information only and that there should therefore be no substantive discussion on them given that this Committee were not able to revisit the decisions reached. The Town Clerk also interjected to state that neither complainants nor subject members were afforded an opportunity to present their cases further to the grand Committee and that this discussion was therefore inappropriate in this forum.

The Co-opted Member accepted this but stated that she would be pursuing the matter elsewhere by making a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman through the Chief Executive. She added that she did, however, think that there was a duty on this Committee to monitor the conduct of complaints which were at the heart of the standards regime and to heed the lessons coming out of them.

The Chair commented that she was happy to discuss general procedural points here and would not discourage that.

Another Co-opted Member commented that when he had looked at the decisions before the Committee today, alongside the subsequent correspondence received on them, he had wanted to raise a general concern around decision writing. He underlined the importance of what he termed the 'four corners approach' and a more rigorous approach so that anyone reading the decision should be able to understand why it has been reached and the basis for this without knowing the background. He felt that this was particularly important in the context of the criticisms levelled at this Committee in the past and that it would be equally important going forward. He also felt that all Sub Committees should be advised of and conscious of the general principles that relate to Judicial Review.

The Chair thanked the Member for his input and stated that she agreed with the principle that the decision letters should be as complete as possible and conform to a certain pattern. She asked that Officers consider this matter further but stressed that it was unlikely to be possible to introduce a set template for such decisions given the very different nature of most complaints.

Another Co-opted Member stated that she felt that this principle should also apply when Members were being asked to provide an apology.

RECEIVED.

The meeting ended at 12.04 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Gemma Stokley
tel.no.: 020 7332 3414
gemma.stokley@cityoflondon.gov.uk