

Standards Committee
11 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillors: Brian Donnelly (Chairman), Peter Burgess, Frances Haigh, Jim Sanson and Philip Baxter

Apologies: Councillors: Diana van der Klugt, Godfrey Newman, Kate Rowbottom and John Donaldson

SC/8 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 June were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to an amendment to reflect that Councillor Frances Haigh had given her apologies.

SC/9 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

SC/10 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

SC/11 **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN UPDATE 2018 - 19**

The Feedback Officer and Head of Customer Services presented the report on the Local Government & Social Care Annual Review 2018 / 2019. The following issues were highlighted:

- That there had been a 50% reduction in complaints about the authority, which represented a significant improvement.
- It was the first time ever that no complaints against the authority were upheld.

The Head of Customer Services thanked the Feedback Officer and Customer Services team for their good work. The Committee acknowledged the high standards maintained by staff and thanked them for ensuring there had been no complaints upheld against the authority.

SC/12 **COMMITTEE FOR ETHICAL STANDARDS REPORT 2019**

The Monitoring Officer presented details of the fifteen recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on Local Government Ethical Standards. The recommendations included: a new power allowing greater sanctions for breaches of the Members Code of Conduct and

more flexibility for local authorities regarding the suspension councillors; revised rules on declaring interests; strengthened the role for the Independent Person; and greater transparency about the number and nature of Code complaints.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life were expecting local authorities to adapt their protocol in line with these recommendations, prior to the legislation being passed. The Council's legal team, with the involvement of Committee, were revising the advice on the complaints procedure available on the Council website so that it reflected the recommendations.

Members discussed the benefits that additional training for Parish Councillors would bring. It was noted that training on Conduct issues for both Parish and District Councillors was being planned for October / November. It was suggested that Horsham District Council attend the Association of Local Councils AGM on 3 October.

The Committee agreed that Councillors Brian Donnelly, Frances Haigh and Jim Sanson would form a working group to draw up a protocol based on the recommendations in the Local Government Ethical Standards Report.

SC/13 **URGENT BUSINESS**

Members were advised that a new Parish Representative would be elected by HALC at their meeting on 12 September.

The meeting closed at 11.06 am having commenced at 10.00 am

CHAIRMAN