

Standards Committee  
5 June 2017

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the STANDARDS Committee held on at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors J.Dean (Chairman)

B.Fitzsimon, S.Markiewicz, S.Roberts and  
P.Zukowskyj

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor J Blackburn (Independent Member)

OFFICIALS PRESENT: N Long, Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance)  
M Martinus, Head of Law & Administration and Monitoring Officer  
I Colyer, Principal Governance Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer  
S Hulks, Governance Services Officer

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6. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was noted that the Council, at its Annual Meeting on 22 May 2017, appointed Councillor John Dean as Chairman of the Committee for 2017/2018.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 8

The Chairman agreed to accept an item of urgent business, that being a discussion by Members on items for the work programme of the Committee.

The reason for accepting the item as urgent was because, if a decision had not been made, officers would not prior knowledge of what to prepare as future agenda items.

Standards Committee  
5 June 2017

10. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Members received a report which presented the Draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the financial year 2016/2017.

The Committee was informed that the AGS had been considered by the Governance Group and that, following its consideration by this Committee it would go to Cabinet and then to the Audit Committee where it would be finalised and signed off by the Leader and Chief Executive Officer.

The AGS was presented in three sections, Processes, Review and Weaknesses.

Members raised the following queries:

- Q Why had the meetings of Heads of Service Team gone from fortnightly to monthly?
- A *This was due to a change of structure of the management of the authority.*
- Q How was the community able to express what data it wished to have published?
- A *Analysis of requests from the public provided officers with indications of the data that was of interest.*

A request was made for inclusion of some information on the all-party procurement groups that were appointed to consider new projects and to make recommendations on preferred contractors. It was agreed that this could be included.

A request was also made to include some information on the scrutiny sub-committee reviews that had taken place during the year. Officers to include this information.

**RESOLVED**

1. That subject to some minor changes and the inclusion of additional information as detailed above, to approve the Draft Annual Governance Statement.
2. That the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make any subsequent amendments to the Draft Annual Governance Statement necessitated by the comments made by this Committee.
3. To recommend the certification of the Draft Annual Governance Statement by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

Standards Committee  
5 June 2017

11. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Members received a report which provided details of a proposal to make arrangements for the appointment by the Council of a panel of two independent persons to advise the Standards Committee, Standards Sub-Committee and Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel.

It was noted that, whilst only one person was needed in the role to advise the Standards Committee and Standards Sub-Committee, two were needed for the Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel and it was therefore intended that two persons should advise all of the groups.

Members were advised that the previous criteria used for this position would be used for the new appointments.

There would be no remuneration for the position. This was a similar situation as for patient representatives or representatives on the police board who took on these types of roles as their contribution to the community.

**RESOLVED**

To agree the arrangements for the appointment by the council of a panel of two independent persons to advise the Standards Committee, Standards Sub-Committee and Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel and to note that the recommended appointments would be made to the Council meeting.

12. SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO WARRANT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

WORK PROGRAMME

Members were asked to nominate topics to be considered as part of the work programme of the Committee.

Officers also advised that there were several policies being reviewed and updated, and they asked Members whether they wished to consider these and if so, what order of priority did they wish to allocate.

It was agreed that the policies would be considered in the following order:

1. Protocol of Member and Officer Relationships
2. Whistleblowing Policy
3. Bribery Policy
4. Anti-Money Laundering Policy
5. Members Role Descriptions

Standards Committee  
5 June 2017

Whilst agreeing that a report on Member Training should not be brought to this Committee, it was agreed that all Members should be encouraged to attend some of the events. It was recognised that it was not possible to pressure Members to attend and it was not thought a good idea to do so.

Meeting ended at 7.20 pm