

Standards Committee  
4 September 2017

## WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on Monday 4 September 2017 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors J.Dean (Chairman)

S.Roberts and P.Zukowskyj

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

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### 13. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S.Markiewicz and Association of Local Councils Representative Mr. J.Blackburn.

### 14. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 15. MEMBER OFFICER PROTOCOL

Pursuant to the decision taken by the Committee at the meeting on 5 June (vide Minute 12 – Work Programme) the report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) presented at Appendix ‘A’ a revised Protocol on Member/Officer Relations (the Protocol) for discussion by Members.

The Appendix set out suggested tracked changes to the Protocol arising from feedback and comments received from Heads of Services representing their respective service areas.

Arising from consideration of Section 2 of the Appendix – ‘The Role of Members’, clarification was sought on whether there was any guidance available on ‘official capacity’ with regard to the role of a Member as a Ward Councillor. The Head of Law and Administration referred to the Council’s adopted Code of Conduct for Members which applied to both the taking of decisions as a Ward Councillor and the discharge of functions as a Ward Councillor.

Reference was then made to the section of the Appendix relating to close personal familiarity between Officers and Members. The protocol stated that if such a familiarity existed then it should be declared but it did not go on to say to whom the declaration should be made. It having been confirmed that the

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declaration should be made to the Monitoring Officer, Members asked that this be made clear in the document.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the addition of the further clarification relating to the declaration of close personal familiarity as outlined above, the suggested tracked changes as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) be approved and the revised Protocol on Member/Officer Relations be referred to the Council for adoption.

16. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN REPORT

The report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) informed the Committee that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) prepared an annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the LGO about local Councils. The report set out at Appendix 'A' the LGO's Annual Review Letter for the year ended 31 March 2017 relating to complaints about Welwyn Hatfield Council . Appendices 'B', 'C' and 'D' provided statistics on the categories of complaints received; on the categories of complaints decided; and a draft decision on an upheld complaint.

Members were informed that there was a statutory duty for the Council to report to Members on adverse outcomes of complaints formally investigated by the LGO.

RESOLVED:

That the annual summary of statistics on complaints made to the Ombudsman about the Council be noted.

Meeting ended at 7.00pm

RB