

**A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE  
WAS HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2021**

Councillors Blackman, Ms Ballard, Beavis, Chegwyn, Mrs Furlong, Herridge, Hylands, Mrs Hook, Mrs Huggins, Murphy, Pepper and Scard

**63. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE**

There were no apologies

**64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none

**65. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2021**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 be signed as a true and correct record.

**66. DEPUTATIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.4**

There were none

**67. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.5**

There were none

**68. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY & STATISTICS**

Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Internal Auditor updating Members in regards to the Whistleblowing Policy and any referrals made from October 2020 to October 2021.

The Chief Internal Auditor advised members that there had been no referrals during the year and the policy had been reviewed with no changes made.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted:

- a. That no referrals had been made under the Whistleblowing Policy between October 2020 and October 2021.
- b. The Whistleblowing Policy had been reviewed and no changes had been made.

**69. AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 1ST APRIL TO 28TH OCTOBER 2021**

Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Internal Auditor updating the Committee on the progress of the Audit Plan 2021/22, agreed (July 2021) to the Members with responsibility for governance.

The Chief Internal Auditor drew Members attention to section 3 where the number of hours spent by the Senior Auditor on Covid grants work were laid out.

He also advised members that two full audits have been completed on IT access and Streetscene Enforcement.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the progress of the Audit Plan 2021/2022 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021- 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

## **70. REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS**

Consideration was given to a report by the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer setting out the need for the Council to review its Code of Conduct for Members and Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members set out in Part 4 Schedule 17 of the Constitution, and considers the proposal of setting up a working group of Members and Officers to review the Code and assist the Borough Solicitor in proposing amendments to a future Committee.

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer reminded Members that a report had been brought to Committee a year ago recommending that the Code should be subject to an annual review. He advised that a working group should be convened to go through the Code and look at proposals for amendments, and was looking for nominations from the Committee.

Members welcomed the initial review and the introduction of an annual review as they felt that legislation and society changes needed to be reflected in the Code. They hoped that sexual harassment would be included in Best Practice recommendation 1, and that dyslexia would be included in Best Practice recommendation 10.

Members also wished to determine what would be considered acceptable language in the Chamber and reflect it in the Code.

Members were advised that the formation of a working group is not covered by the Constitution in the same way as a Task & Finish Group is and not subject to the same rules and therefore the group can agree on how the group works and where it is drawn from.

The Borough Solicitor advised that he would also be consulting the Independent Persons and Group Leaders hence the possible need for two meetings.

A Member felt that making it an annual review removed the suspicion that there was a specific purpose for reviewing the Code.

A Member felt that substitutes should be allowed to cover the eventuality of someone falling ill or isolating with Covid, but Members felt this would be covered by having 5 Members in the Working Group.

Members felt that holding the meeting on Teams should be an option, but only as a plan B

A Member felt that proportionality did not need to be observed in the Working Group.

Standards and Governance Committee  
18 November 2021

A Member proposed an amendment to the Recommendation that the Working Group should only consist of three Members. This was seconded and a vote taken which was lost.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agreed to establish a working group of five members (made up of the Chairman plus four other members of the Committee) to work with Officers to review the Code of Conduct for Members and Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members and to consider proposals for amendment so that the Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer can report back to the Committee at a subsequent meeting in early 2022 with proposals for amendments for onward submission to the Policy & Organisation Board and Full Council for a change of the Constitution.

**71. ANY OTHER ITEMS**

**CHAIRMAN**

Concluded at 6.20 pm