

Report for: Standards Committee 27th of June 2023

Title: Responses to three of the recommendations arising from the independent review of the Council's arrangements for property negotiations, acquisitions, and disposals or intended transactions

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Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non-Key Decision:** Non-Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 The Action Plan for the Independent review of the Council's arrangements for property negotiations, acquisitions, and disposals or intended transactions, approved at Cabinet on the 18th of April 2023 indicated that constitutional related actions would be going forward to the Standards Committee in June/ October 2023 & Full Council in July/ November 2023.
- 1.2 This report responds to the recommendation that the Council issue additional guidance on the role of Council appointees to voluntary sector organisations, reminding them of their role as stewards of public funds and assets is attached at Appendix 1. The advice provided by the Monitoring Officer on Outside bodies includes additional wording on the role as stewards of public funds. The Action Plan indicates that existing guidance will be reviewed and new guidance or amendments as required will be implemented. This has been updated in consultation with the Constitution Review Working Group. The review identified a need for training for members and officers relating to this area. This took place on 15th of June 2023. There is an action to look to having a Signed declaration of having read new guidance and this is planned for implementation following Council approval in July.
- 1.3 The response to recommendation that the Council review guidance to councillors meeting with landowners, contractors etc when not in their capacity as ward councillors, is attached at Appendix 2. This has been compiled by considering the seven principles of public life, the Planning Protocol of the Council and LGA guidance on ethical governance. The action plan agreed by the Cabinet on the 18th of April, indicates an initial document to Standards in June, Council in July and then Standards in October and Council in November 2023. The Constitution Working Group comments are included in this guidance.

- 1.4 The response to recommendation that further information on the Leader's powers are included in the Constitution are attached and this shows some additional wording added to the Protocol for Decision Making to provide consistency and support for good decision making. There will be officer training on decision making reports managed by Legal services and supported by Democratic services, Procurement Team and Policy team where these additions will be highlighted. The Asset Management Plan action plans, also identifies a full review of property related processes. This review will inform any required further updates to Section D and part 5 of the Constitution, in November from a service perspective and will come to Standards in October .

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To consider and recommend the adoption of Appendix 1 – Advice on Outside Bodies to full Council on the 17th of July 2023.
- 3.2 To consider and recommend the adoption of Appendix 2 -- Guidance for Councillors on contact with third parties and stakeholders. to full Council on the 17th of July 2023.
- 3.3 To consider and recommend the adoption of Appendix 3(track changes) and Appendix 4(final version) of updates to the Part 5 Section D, Protocol for Decision Making, to full Council on the 17th of July 2023.

4. Reason for recommendations

- 4.1 To respond to the Action Plan for the Independent review of the Council's arrangements for property negotiations, acquisitions, and disposals or intended transactions, approved at Cabinet on the 18th of April 2023 indicated that constitutional related actions would be going forward to the Standards Committee in June/ October 2023 & Full Council in July/November 2023.

5. Alternative Options

None - As this report and appendices are a requirement of the Action Plan arising from the independent review of the Council's arrangements for property negotiations, acquisitions, and disposals or intended transactions, approved at Cabinet on the 18th of April 2023.

4. Background information

- 4.1 As set out in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4. The cross-party Constitution Working Group has been consulted on and commented on the appendices put forward for approval.

5. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

Finance

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of The Review recommendations. Any changes in practice, as a result of the implementation of the recommendations will of course improve the financial efficiency of the Council.

Head of Legal and Governance & Monitoring Officer

These are set out within the report.

Equalities

The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not

The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

The recommendations relate to governance changes to allow for different approvals mechanisms for decisions relating to property to be created. The rationale behind these changes is to ensure that asset management decisions are sufficiently robust, transparent and take into account all of the relevant and necessary information. As enabling processes and actions for service delivery and improved financial management, it is considered that implementing these recommendations in and of themselves will have a neutral equality impact, as they will not have any disproportionate impact on groups which share protected characteristics.

6. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Advice on Outside Bodies

Appendix 2 – Guidance for Councillors on contact with third parties and stakeholders.

Appendix 3 – Section 5 Part D Protocol for Decision Making (Track Changes)

Appendix 4 - Section 5 Part D Protocol for Decision Making (published version)

7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

7.1 Background documents:

- *Haringey Council's Constitution*

7.2 The background papers are located at George Meehan House , Wood Green, London N22 8JZ.

7.3 To inspect them or to discuss this report further, please contact Ayshe Simsek on 0208 489 2929.