

# **MINUTES OF THE Standards Committee HELD ON Monday, 29th June, 2026, 7.30 - 8.03 pm**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Scott Emery, Mike Hodges, Andrea Hodgson (Chair), Edward Thacker and Elin Weston**

### **1. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

#### **RESOLVED:**

The filming at meetings notice was notice.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

### **3. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **5. MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting 9 March 2026 were discussed.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting 9 March 2026 were agreed.

### **6. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME FOR 2026-2027 UPDATE TO REFLECT ACCESS TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME.**

The Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager introduced the report.

It was explained that this report sought to align the current pension scheme with government regulations to allow for Members to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

It was explained that assurances had been received from the finance team to explain that the impact of the scheme from employer contributions would not be significant, due to the lower level of Councillor allowances.

It was noted that advice on enrolment, and the implications of enrolment, could be sought by Members from the Pensions team, and it was additionally explained that there was a scheduled Member briefing to explain the scheme in Autumn 2026.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Standards Committee recommended the following be adopted by Full Council:

1. Agreed the updates to the Members' Allowances Scheme set out at section 6 and reflected at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. Agreed to recommend that the Members' Allowances Scheme 2026/27 attached at Appendix 1 and agreed by the Committee be adopted by Full Council on 20 July 2026.

**Reasons for decision**

The Council had a legal duty to approve a Members Allowances Scheme before the end of each year to cover the following year. The Council can amend a scheme any time during the year. Following the change in legislation, on the 11 May 2026, to allow councillors in England the option of joining the Local Government Pension Scheme, the updated scheme was attached. This included some key information for members about the LGPS and how they can opt in and make payments from their basic allowance.

**Alternative options considered.**

No alternative options were considered as there was a duty to ensure that the scheme reflects the provisions available to members.

**7. DISPENSATION IN RELATION TO MEMBERSHIP OF NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY (NLWA)**

The Committees Manager introduced the report.

It was explained that the proposed dispensation would be in place to give Members of the Cabinet permissions to make decisions in Cabinet and Full Council relating to the NLWA.

It was noted that there were differences between the dispensation for Alexandra Palace and Park Board and the NLWA appointment due to the Alexandra Palace and Park Board being a Council appointment, which contained specific wording in the Constitution to allow decision making to take place.

**RESOLVED:**

The Standards Committee:

1. Agreed to grant a dispensation to Councillors Johann Beckford and Gio Iozzi to allow them to participate in debates and votes on matters relating to NLWA business: waste disposal, energy from waste, waste facilities, waste transfer stations, reuse and recycling and any other waste related issues until Councillors Johann Beckford and Gio Iozzi cease to be a member of NLWA; and
2. Agreed that granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area.
3. Delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to prepare the dispensation for publication on the Council's website.

### **Reasons for decision**

Under the Council's Constitution, the Standards Committee is responsible for granting dispensations to councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.

### **Alternative options considered**

To not grant a dispensation. Where a dispensation is not granted, a councillor present at a meeting with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered, or being considered at the meeting may not participate in any discussion nor vote on the matter and must withdraw from the room.

## **8. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

The Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager introduced the report.

It was explained that the threshold for requiring political assistants had been reached by three political groups within the Council.

Officers stressed that there was a need to demonstrate value for money for these posts, and that the Council would undertake the required due diligence to ensure this value. However, it was explained, that, in the meantime, there was a need to recruit to these roles, due to the current need of the political groups. Following this, a review of the roles would be undertaken over the next year. It was explained that the outcome of the reviews would be considered by the Appointments Panel.

It was noted that there had been additional wording proposed to be added to the Constitution which codified the role of the Political Assistant which would enable this work to be undertaken.

Officers explained that the review into the role would be wide-ranged and would consider different options of delivery, as well as benchmark how other Local Authorities undertake the role.

Following questions from the Committee, the following points were made:

- Members expressed support for the role as a good point of contact and liaison between officers and Members.
- It was noted by officers that there were possibilities to differentiate hours of the role, which could be considered as part of the review.
- The Committee expressed concerns regarding transparency of the Appointments Panel in reviewing the role of the Political Assistant. It was suggested, and agreed, that the review be referred to Standards Committee rather than the Appointments panel, and amend recommendation 3.5 to reflect this.

## **RESOLVED:**

That the Standards Committee recommended the following to Full Council:

1. Noted the current best value considerations for appointment of political assistants set out at section 7 of the report for three political groups noting that there is a maximum of 3 positions that can be appointed to meet legislative requirements.
2. Taking into account the government Guidance which suggests that there should be reviews of these particular posts to ensure value for money, agreed the appointment of three political assistants on a one-year fixed contract ending in September 2027 to allow a review of these roles between August and November 2026.
3. Agreed to a review of the roles, including potential options for employment on a full or part - time basis, taking account the operation of the roles and whether they continue to provide value for money, particularly in the light of the Council's challenging financial position.
4. Agreed that the review findings and final decisions on the terms and conditions of the appointments and contracts are delegated to the Standards Committee for final decision in November 2026, in time for consideration as part of the budget proposals if required.
5. Agreed the updates to the Council's Constitution set out at Appendix 1.

## **Reasons for decision**

The increase in the number of political groups with over 10% of council membership.

To meet government Guidance which suggested that there should be reviews of these particular posts to ensure value for money.

The need to update the Council's Constitution on these appointments as there was currently not the detail required by section 9 of the 1989 Act.

### **Alternative options considered**

To not agree the continuation of the appointment of Political Assistants and delete these posts from the establishment of the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Team. This was not agreed by the political group leaders and it is acknowledged that political assistants could play a valuable role in supporting the political decision-making of the Council.

## **9. CONFIRMATION OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDARDS ASSESSMENT AND HEARING SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Committees Manager introduced the report. The rationale for the report was outlined.

There were no questions regarding the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Standards Committee:

1. Agreed that, given the need for members' expertise and discretion, the membership of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee and the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee be the same as the membership of the Standards Committee.

## **10. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee Work Programme was discussed.

### **RESOLVED:**

The Committee Work Programme was noted.

## **11. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

## **12. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next extraordinary meeting was agreed as the 14 September 2026.

The next meeting was agreed as 3 November 2026.

CHAIR: Councillor Andrea Hodgson

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....