

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 6TH JULY, 2017, 7.10 - 8.00 pm

PRESENT:

**Councillors: Kaushika Amin (Chair), Liz Morris, Stuart McNamara,
Felicia Opoku and Lorna Reith**

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair drew attendees' attention to the notice on filming at meetings.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Beacham, for whom Councillor Morris was attending as substitute. Councillor Morris gave apologies for lateness.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

6. STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEES AND OUTLINE WORK PROGRAMME

Michael Kay, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, introduced a report that sought to establish the arrangements for the handling of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct, and set out the proposed work programme for the Committee over the coming municipal year. This included further review work of the Council's procedures, as set out in the Constitution, and a fundamental review of the scheme of Members' allowances.

In discussion on the proposed work programme, the following points were made:

1. Members indicated that they would likely want to consult with Members more widely on proposals for a new allowances scheme. The form of this consultation could be discussed at the November meeting, when they would have opportunity to consider proposals for a new scheme.

2. Members had suggestions of roles currently not in receipt of an allowance that should be, given the level of commitment and responsibility they entailed – for example, the Vice Chair of the Regulatory Committee.
3. The new allowances scheme ought to provide for potential outcomes of the May 2018 elections, and may need to include flexible provisions, for example on the number or size of political groups.
4. The next meeting should receive information on levels of allowance elsewhere.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a. Agree the membership of the Standards Assessment Sub Committee and the Standards Hearing Sub Committee, as set out at 5.3 of the report
- b. Note the proposals for the Committee's outline work programme

7. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Victoria Barman, Senior Project Lawyer (Corporate), introduced a report that set out proposed changes to the Constitution in four main areas – noting the establishment of the joint sub-committee of the Health and Wellbeing Board with Islington, removing the Council and Employees Joint Consultative Committee from the Constitution, a review of the Statutory, Proper and Specified Officer functions within the Officer Scheme of Delegation, and other minor amendments for clarification purposes. These proposals had been deferred from the March meeting of the Standards Committee without consideration, and had been presented to Members in a briefing session in May.

The following points were made in discussion:

1. It would be helpful if the Constitution were clear on the implications of being a political group within the Council, including the entitlement to a Political Assistant.
2. Early circulation of potential changes to the Constitution would be helpful in allowing more Members to have opportunity to consider the changes and potentially attend the Standards Committee meeting where they would be considered. It was also noted that that may be difficult to achieve in practice, but was a good ambition and the Standards Committee ought to consider whether proposed changes should be consulted on further when presented with them.
3. That, rather than full sections being included in papers, future meetings could be furnished with only extracts showing proposed changes to the Constitution, with a full Constitution available for reference.
4. That it may be helpful for a glossary to be prepared, helping the reader understand terms used throughout the Constitution.

In addition to the proposed changes set out in the report, Members agreed that they would recommend Full Council reduce the threshold for the registering of gifts and hospitality to £25 or above, and that that ought to be included in the Members' Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommend full Council:

- a) Note the establishment of a joint sub-committee of the Health and Wellbeing Board with Islington Council and consequently, agree the following amendments to the Constitution:
 - (i) Part 2, 'Articles' at paragraph 4.02 (v) and 10.09 (Appendix 6 of the report);
 - (ii) Part 3, Section B 'Responsibility for functions: Full Council and Non-Executive Bodies' at Section 1 paragraph 1(v) and Section 2 paragraph 8.1 (Appendix 1 of the report)
- b) Note the removal of the Council and Employees Joint Consultative Committee at Part 3, Section B 'Responsibility for functions: Full Council and Non-Executive Bodies' at Section 3 paragraph 1 (Appendix 1 of the report); and associated amendment at Part 4, Section B 'Committee Procedure Rules' rule 58 (Appendix 7 of the report), following the decision of the Staffing and remuneration Committee to dissolve this sub-committee;
- c) Approve changes to Statutory, Proper and Specified Officer functions within the Officer Scheme of Delegation together with minor amendments, for clarification purposes, as set out at:
 - (i) Part 3, Section E Officer Scheme of Delegation at Section 3 'Delegations to the Chief Executive and Statutory Officers' (Appendix 2 of the report);
 - (ii) Part 3, Section E Officer Scheme of Delegation at Section 4 'Proper Officer and Specified Officer Functions' (Appendix 3 of the report);
- d) Approve minor amendments to the Constitution for clarification purposes, as set out at:
 - (i) Part 2, 'Articles' (Appendix 6 of the report);
 - (ii) Part 3, Section B 'Responsibility for functions: Full Council and Non-Executive Bodies' at Section 1 paragraph 1(g) and Section 3 (Appendix 1 of the report);
 - (iii) Part 3, Section D 'Responsibility for functions: Local Choice Functions' at point 16 (Appendix 4 of the report);
 - (iv) Part 3, New Section DA 'Responsibility for functions: Joint Committees and arrangements', to record such arrangements entered into by the Council where these joint committees carry out functions on behalf of the authority (Appendix 5 of the report);

- (v) Part 4, Section B 'Committee Procedure Rules' (Appendix 7 of the report)
- e) Approve the following work streams to be taken forward to update and maintain the Constitution:
 - (i) Following the departure of the AD for Corporate Property and Major projects, there will need to be further amendments to the Officer Scheme of Delegation. Council is asked to authorise appropriate amendments to be made to the Constitution by the Monitoring Officer.
Until the reallocation of responsibilities has been determined by the Chief Executive, the existing rules identifying the relevant officer(s) to make decisions in the absence of the AD Corporate Property and Major Projects will pertain;
 - (ii) A review of the Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution in order to reduce duplication and inconsistencies, and make them easier to follow. These changes will reported to Standards Committee in due course and on to full Council thereafter;
 - (iii) A review of the Planning Protocol (currently outside the Constitution) is being carried out by Planning Sub-Committee and Regulatory Committee. This will be reported to the Standards Committee in September 2017 for approval as part of the Constitution, and for confirmation by full Council thereafter;
 - (iv) A wholesale review of the Member – Officer Protocol, to reflect changes to the Council structure, governance, and officer powers, and bring the document up-to-date with current practices. These changes will reported to Standards Committee in due course and on to full Council thereafter.
- f) Approve changes to the Members' Code of Conduct to reflect the need to register gifts and hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25.

8. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

9. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

14 September, 16 November and 8 March.

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved.

11. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSESSMENT SUB COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meetings of the Standards Assessment Sub Committee held on 21 February and 11 May were confirmed.

12. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS

None

CHAIR: Councillor Kaushika Amin

Signed by Chair

Date