

STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE

Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Wednesday, 8th March, 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Lee Waters in the Chair;

Councillors Christian Chapman, Andy Gascoyne
(as substitute for Jamie Bell), Warren Nuttall and
Helen-Ann Smith.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Chris Baron and Jamie Bell.

Officers Present: Lynn Cain, Ruth Dennis, Mike Joy and
Shane Wright.

SP.14 Appointment of Chairman to Commence the Meeting

RESOLVED

that Councillor Helen-Ann Smith be appointed as Chairman to commence the meeting due to the Chairman, Councillor Lee Waters, running late due to inclement weather.

SP.15 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

SP.16 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 December 2022, be received and approved as a correct record.

SP.17 Annual Ethical Governance Update

(Councillor Lee Waters took the Chair, having arrived at 7.05pm.)

The Executive Director for Governance and Monitoring Officer presented an overview of the work of the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee during 2022/2023 including proposals for the new Workplan for 2023/24.

Members acknowledged that the Work Plan would be almost complete following consideration of the items on the agenda that evening. In respect of the review of the Nottinghamshire Authorities Protocol with Nottinghamshire Police, this piece of work would again be rolled forward to the new 2023/24

Work Plan for completion. Frequent changes in Police personnel, specifically the SPOC Officer (Single Point of Contact) had stalled progression of the review over the previous year but now a new officer was in place, it was intended to commence the review following the District Council Elections in May 2023.

A couple of items had been added as suggested items for the 2023/24 Workplan and these were as follows:

- evaluation of the Members' Training and Induction Programme post delivery, including the ongoing development of appropriate training opportunities for Members going forward
- review of the Members' Code of Conduct to consider any amendments following its approval in 2021 (taking into account any updates should the LGA also revisit their Model Code of Conduct document content during 2023/24).

In respect of the review of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy following its introduction in 2019, Members acknowledged that no changes would be required to the content on this occasion. It was also noted that a single Gifts and Hospitality submission had been received from a Member earlier in the municipal year.

The Scrutiny Research Officer advised Members that following on from the last meeting, no changes had been suggested by Members in respect of the Social Media Policy so the document would go forward for Council approval in May 2023 as per the agreed procedure.

RESOLVED that

- a) progress made in relation to the agreed 2022/23 Work Plan, as presented, be noted;
- b) the suggested Work Plan items for 2023/2024, as outlined in the report, be approved;
- c) the single declaration of Member gifts and hospitality received during 2022/23, be noted;
- d) the outcome of the review of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy to make no changes to the policy at the present time, be noted;
- e) Council be recommended to approve the Members' Social Media Policy as attached at Appendix 2 to the report;
- f) the number of Member complaints received during 2022/23 to date as summarised in the report and the current outstanding complaints as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, be noted.

SP.18 Annual Constitution Review

The Scrutiny Research Officer presented the report which detailed the proposed annual changes to the Constitution for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Members were asked to note that the proposed changes were fairly minimal, which was to be expected in the run up to the District Council Elections in May 2023. The table contained in the report, highlighted the main changes for 2023/24 including any textual amendments and updates to officer titles as required.

Since publication of the agenda, a further change had been added to the list in respect of Council Procedure Rule 14 (Motions on Notice). It was intended that reference would be made to the new Motion Proforma that would be required to be completed by any Member wishing to submit a motion. In addition, it would now be a requirement for the mover to obtain and include on the Proforma document, any potential financial implications for their motion should it be subsequently approved.

During the discussion particularly around the unnecessary length of text in recent motions and a possible return to more succinct motions minus any preambles, it was suggested that should such a change be made, movers of motions should be given more time to present their motions rather than just the 5 minutes as currently prescribed.

RESOLVED

that the proposed changes to the 2023/24 Council Constitution as outlined in the report and during presentation at the meeting, be endorsed and submitted to Council for approval subject to the incorporation of an extended speech time for movers of motions only.

SP.19 Member Induction Programme 2023

The Scrutiny Research Officer presented the report and explained the draft format and content of the Member induction and training programme for implementation following the District Council Elections on 4 May 2023.

Having listened to Members' feedback and suggestions at the last meeting, it was intended to run the programme over 3 days with some training sessions being delivered to smaller groups as requested. Regular breaks had been incorporated and more of the sessions were to be delivered by external trainers as opposed to officers, again as suggested by Members.

It was intended that the first day (9 May) would be an induction 'drop in' session to enable new Members to sign the declarations of office, have their photos taken, collect their IT equipment and complete their HR forms for payment purposes and DBS checks as required. It would also give new Members the opportunity to meet the Democratic Services Team and Senior Officers as part of the induction process. It was acknowledged by the Committee that a further evening induction session would be arranged to enable new Members with work commitments to attend.

Three further training days would then follow provisionally on Wednesday, 10 May, Friday, 12 May and Monday 15 May. Training slots were currently being allocated to service areas across the Council and confirmation had been received that the Local Government Association (LGA) would be in attendance to deliver a session in respect of appropriate Member behaviours and meeting etiquette.

Once the initial induction and training programme was complete, it was intended to arrange further targeted training sessions across the following weeks to impart more in-depth knowledge to new Members once they had been appointed to Committees etc.

To enable training providers and Council officers to gain some insight into new Members preferred methods of learning, it was suggested that enabling Members to undertake a Myers-Briggs style of questionnaire to ascertain how their personality affects learning and teaching styles, might enhance the learning experience going forward.

RESOLVED

that the draft Member Induction Programme 2023, as detailed within the report, be noted and approved in principle.

SP.20 Annual Whistleblowing Policy Update

The Executive Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer presented the report and asked Members to approve the two minor job title changes to the Whistleblowing Policy as appended to the report. There had been one anonymously reported incident of whistleblowing drawn to the Monitoring Officer's attention over the past year but having been investigated, it was found to have no foundation and no further action was required.

RESOLVED that

- a) the minor changes to the Whistleblowing Policy in accordance with the draft attached to the report at Appendix 1, be approved;
- b) the operation of the Whistleblowing Policy during 2022/23 to date, be received and noted.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Chairman.