

STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE

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

on Wednesday, 7th December, 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Helen-Ann Smith in the Chair;

Councillors Chris Baron, Christian Chapman,
Samantha Deakin, Tom Hollis and
Warren Nuttall.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Jamie Bell and Lee Waters.
Mary Wright (Selston Parish Council
Representative).

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

In Attendance: Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Annesley & Felley
Parish Council Representative).

SP.8 Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

that Councillor Helen-Ann Smith be appointed as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

SP.9 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

SP.10 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 2022, be received and approved as a correct record.

SP.11 Review of Members' Social Media Policy

The Scrutiny Research Officer presented the report and reminded Members that the review of the Members' Social Media Policy had been included on the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee Workplan for 2022/2023.

It had been four years since the Policy was first adopted and Members were asked to consider any changes/additions they might wish to make. The Policy document had been appended to the report and a link to access the Local Government Association's social media guides had been sent to Members under separate cover to aid their understanding and thoughts prior to the

meeting.

Obvious minor updates had already been made to the Policy document in respect of outdated phrases etc. and following Members consideration it was intended to bring the final version back to the March meeting of the Committee prior to its submission to the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2023 for approval.

Members considered the content of the Policy and views were divided as to whether the Policy should be finalised by existing Members in March 2023 (and ratified at the Annual Council Meeting) or held in abeyance for consideration by new Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee Members as part of their 2023/24 Workplan.

RESOLVED

that minor changes/updates be made to the current Members' Social Media Policy document for consideration at the March meeting, whereby a final decision will be taken as to its possible adoption at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2023 or its addition to the 2023/24 Standards Workplan for consideration by new Members.

SP.12 Member Induction Programme 2023

The Service Manager, Scrutiny and Democratic Services presented the report and reminded Committee that following concerns from Members regarding the protracted delivery of training during 2015 over a series of weeks, it was agreed that the training following the District Council elections in 2019 would be delivered in a condensed format over a 2-day period. This was on the whole, well received and Members were now being asked to consider what format should be adopted for training new Members following the 2023 elections.

It was acknowledged that the drop-in sessions for training Members on their iPads were not very well attended and thought needed to be given to an alternative delivery method that would better introduce Members to the use of any new IT equipment in the course of their duties.

A discussion ensued and Members made the following comments:

- the 2-day session was useful and kept Members engaged as no one training session lasted more than 45 minutes to an hour
- the condensed 2-day training session was useful to Members who worked full time as they could make proper arrangements for taking leave as required
- concerns regarding the level of information to be absorbed in a short space of time and the potential for new Members to feel overwhelmed
- suggestion that more breaks could be incorporated into the training days to allow new Members to pace their learning
- suggestion that training could be delivered simultaneously to smaller

groups of Members to enable a more informal, interactive approach

- it was acknowledged that more training would be beneficial in relation to acceptable standards of governance and Member behaviour
- the possible introduction of a dedicated intranet page for Members to offer access to pertinent documents, agendas/minutes and online training etc.
- a request for new Members to be furnished with a Glossary of Terms to aid familiarisation with local government terminology.
- officers to be aware that not all Members are familiar with IT and provision would need to be made for all levels of ability
- a request that training dates are finalised in good time and included in any candidate briefing packs.

Following the debate, the Director of Legal and Governance (and Monitoring Officer) advised that the Council was open to using different methods of training delivery including the engagement of external support if required. The Local Government Association had an array of training tools available to local authorities that could be utilised if needed.

RESOLVED that

the Service Manager, Scrutiny and Democratic Services be requested to undertake the following:

- a) to formulate a draft induction training itinerary for new Members following the District Council Elections in May 2023, based on the following criteria and to be presented to Members at the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee meeting in March 2023:
 - the training sessions to be spread over a three day period;
 - to target training sessions to smaller groups on a rotation basis to encourage a more interactive and informal approach to learning;
 - to incorporate online training into the itinerary as required to ensure a wide range of training topics are offered to new Members;
 - incorporating regular breaks into the three-day training itinerary;
- b) to explore the provision of a new dedicated Members' intranet page to offer access to pertinent documents, agendas/minutes and online training etc. as required.

SP.13 Quarterly Complaints and Gifts and Hospitality Monitoring

The Service Manager, Scrutiny and Democratic Services presented the report and advised that since the last update four new District Councillor complaints had been received, one Selston Parish Council complaint had been received and five ongoing complaints had now been concluded and signed off by the Independent Person as to the proposed courses of action.

RESOLVED that

- a) the updated position in respect of Members' Code of Conduct complaints, as presented at Appendix A, be received and duly noted;
- b) it also be noted that no declarations of Member gifts and hospitality had been reported since the last Committee update in June 2022.

The meeting closed at 7.58 pm

Chairman.