

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Monday, 20 January 2020 at 7pm

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Fleet

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Ambler, Bailey, Clarke, Dorn, Kennett, Neighbour

In Attendance: Forster (left 7.30 pm)

Independent Member: Peter Kern

Parish Representatives: Alastair Clark, David Argent, Trish Monks

Independent Person: Peter Moore

Officers Present:	Daryl Phillips	Monitoring Officer
	Gill Chapman	Committee Services
	Martina Duffin	Committee Services

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Alastair Clark was elected as Chairman and Councillor Tony Clarke as Vice Chairman.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 6 March 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that item 8, Petitions Protocol, would be taken earlier.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

6 UPDATE - COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

Members noted the decisions on recent complaints.

NB Mr Argent reported that he was to sit on a Grievance Panel at Odiham Parish Council relating to the issues mentioned.

DECISION

That the information be noted.

7 LOCALISM ACT: SECTION 28(6) – ADJUSTMENTS TO CODE OF CONDUCT ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS

Members considered the adjustments to the arrangements for dealing with complaints about Councillor conduct.

Members considered the adjustments regarding third party complaints, complaints being used as a publicity tool, social media issues prejudging investigations, anonymous complaints, right of appeal, and avoiding potential abuse of the system.

Members had forwarded further amendments to the Monitoring Officer, which were discussed. Members agreed particularly that changes should include:

- The addition of Chairman of Standards Committee in consultation with the Independent Person in respect of the procedures out lines in Appendix A of the adjusted Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations
- Confidentiality
- Possible appeal reference to the Ombudsman
- Clarification on 'Persistent' - meaning repeat of the same complaint
- Recommendations/Decision of the Hearing panel timescale

It was agreed that the Monitoring Officer would circulate an updated document to Committee members for any further comments, with a view to the document being presented for adoption at the February Council meeting.

DECISION

That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee, be authorised to update the Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations as per the Committee's discussions.

RECOMMENDATION to Council

That the updated Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations be adopted.

8 PETITIONS PROTOCOL

The Committee considered whether the petition scheme should be amended to accommodate e-petitions where the supporters of the petition only provide their name and postcode.

Members were broadly in favour of an amendment to the Protocol, and particularly considered:

- A host website (such as Change.org or 38Degrees) being used for e-petitions until such time as Hart could host its own e-petition system requiring the information, level of security and compliance with existing paper petitions
- Budget implications - no cost or resource implications in using a host website
- GDPR implications

Other minor changes to the Protocol, eg typos, were accepted and an updated copy would be circulated to Members of the Committee for information.

DECISION

That the Petitions Protocol would be amended to accept electronic submissions for petitions, with a view to the amended document, as part of the Constitution, being presented to Council for approval.

RECOMMENDATION to Council

That the updated Petitions Protocol be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm