EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the consultative meeting of Standards Committee held online via zoom on 14 September 2021

Attendance list at end of document
The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 2.45 pm

1 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 January 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 January 2021 were recommended to senior officers for approval.

DECISION:
The recommendation was approved by a Senior Officer. The Senior Officer Decision Notice is listed above under Additional Documents.

3 Declarations of interest

None.

4 Matters of urgency

None.

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None.

6 East Devon District Council Standards Regime update

The Committee were presented with an update report covering:

- Possible arrangements for introduction of a Standards Assessment Sub-Committee
- Review of Code of Conduct and Protocol for relationships between Members and Officers
- Paying for training costs
- Information on code of conduct complaints for the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020, and the period 1 January 2021 to 31 August 2021.

Discussion included:

- Clarification on budget for District Councillor training was provided as £5k per year, reported as an underspend if the budget was not used;
- Any recommendations by the Standards Working Group would come back to the Standards Committee;
- The Standards Working Group should undertake a review of the Employee Code of Conduct, in tandem with the work they were already undertaking on the Councillor Code of Conduct, and the planned review of the Member/Officer

relationship protocol. The Committee agreed this approach and asked the Monitoring Officer to action, which he agreed to do;

- Mixed views on the Chair of Standards Committee acting as Chair for the Standards Assessment Sub Committee (SASC), and if that should not take place. The membership of the Standards Committee had already increased, giving a wider number of Members to call upon to sit on the SASC as required, with different Committee Members called upon to sit on any subsequent Standards Hearings Sub Committee (SHSC); on balance, the Committee felt that the detail in the revised standards procedure should remain;
- Drawing from the wider membership for the SASC had been discussed previously, but on balance it was felt that this was difficult to put into practice on a practical basis from 60 members and keeping political balance;
- That the revised standards procedure document should include a definition of Independent Representatives and Town and Parish Representatives.

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. Approval of a revised procedure for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints, and related Constitutional amendments to implement it;
2. Approve that any training requirement imposed by way of sanction against a District Councillor be paid for by the District Council and that a budget of £5,000 be provided for this purpose.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Thomas (Chair)
D Barrow
J Loudoun
E Rylance
P Twiss

Co-opted members present:

Pat Coulter
Martin Goscomb
Robert Wood
Pauline Stott

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
M Chapman
P Faithfull
T McCollum
P Millar

Officers in attendance:

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing (and Monitoring Officer)
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies:

C Gardner; Bob Nelson