



City of Westminster

# Committee Agenda

Title: **Standards Committee**

Meeting Date: **Monday 5th December, 2022**

Time: **6.30 pm**

Venue: **Room 18.06, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP**

Members: **Councillors:**  
Patricia McAllister (Chair)  
Louise Hyams  
Md Shamsed Chowdhury  
Sara Hassan  
Rachael Robathan



**Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion Part 1 of the Agenda**

**Admission to the public gallery is by ticket, issued from the ground floor reception from 6.00pm. If you have a disability and require any special assistance please contact the Committee Officer (details listed below) in advance of the meeting.**

**If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Tristan Fieldsend, Senior Committee and Councillor Co-ordinator.**

**Email: [tfieldsend@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:tfieldsend@westminster.gov.uk); Tel: 07812 760 335  
Corporate Website: [www.westminster.gov.uk](http://www.westminster.gov.uk)**

**Note for Members:** Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions they should contact the the Director of Law in advance of the meeting please.

## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)**

**1. MEMBERSHIP**

To note any changes to the membership.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations by Members and Officers of the existence and nature of any pecuniary interests or any other significant interest in matters on this agenda.

**3. MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2022 as a correct record of proceedings.

**(Pages 3 - 6)**

**4. ANNUAL Q&A WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON ETHICAL STANDARDS**

**5. ANNUAL UPDATE ON MEMBER COMPLAINTS**

Report of the Director of Law

**(Pages 7 - 10)**

**6. WORK PROGRAMME**

**(Pages 11 - 16)**

**Stuart Love  
Chief Executive  
25 November 2022**



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

## MINUTES

### Standards Committee

#### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **Thursday 15th September 2022**, Room 18.12, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

**Members Present:** Councillors Patricia McAllister (Chair), Melvyn Caplan, Md Shamsed Chowdhury, Sara Hassan and Louise Hyams

**Also Present:** Asif Iqbal and Elizabeth Walters (Independent Persons)

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Tim Mitchell

#### 1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 It was noted that Councillor Melvyn Caplan was substituting for Councillor Tim Mitchell.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were none.

#### 3 MINUTES

- 3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2022 be signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

#### 4 REVIEW OF THE MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

- 4.1 Parveen Akhtar, Director of Law, introduced the report setting out the review undertaken to strengthen the guidance on relationships between Officers and Members. The intention was that the updated protocol helped support the establishment of good working relationships between Members and Officers in their work together and described their different but complementary roles within the Council.

- 4.2 The Committee welcomed the review of the protocol and agreed a strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between Members and Officers was essential to the effective and efficient working of the Council. The amendments to the protocol were considered appropriate in bringing the document up to date and in particular the importance of including the Nolan Principles in the protocol was noted along with a separate section on bullying.
- 4.3 During the Committee's discussions several amendments to the draft protocol were suggested. These included an updating of the section on the roles of Chairs. This included some historic language regarding Chairs acting as spokespersons on certain issues. It was considered that this reflected historical practice rather than the current situation and as such this section of the paragraph should be deleted. Concern was also expressed that under the 'Correspondence and Communications' section there was no mention of what the consequences were if Members had not received a response to an enquiry from an officer before the expiry of ten days. In response it was confirmed this paragraph could be amended to explain that if Members had not received any response after the expiry of ten days the relevant Director should be informed. One final update related to amending all references to Chairman in the protocol to Chair as the majority of the Committee felt this would be a more appropriate reference.
- 4.4 The Committee discussed the significance of the protocol and was of the opinion that it should form an important part of the induction process for new Members and officers, with refresher training also available for existing Members and officers. This would form part of the process of ensuring the behaviours and treatment that each can expect from the other was embedded in the culture throughout the organisation.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the revised Member/Officer Protocol be recommended for approval to the General Purposes Committee and Full Council subject to the following amendments:
  - i) The bullying paragraph be repositioned in a more prominent position nearer the start of the protocol to reflect its importance;
  - ii) The Role of Chairs paragraph be updated to remove historical language around the position of Chairs as spokespersons;
  - iii) References to Chairman in the protocol be changed to Chair ;and
  - iv) An addition to the Correspondence and Communications paragraph setting out that if Members had not received any response from officers to an enquiry after the expiry of ten days then the relevant Director should be informed.

- 2) That training on the Member/Officer Protocol be mandatory for all new Members and Officers with regular refresher sessions held for all existing Members and Officers.

## **5 WORK PROGRAMME**

- 5.1 The Committee noted the 2022-23 Work Programme and was asked to consider any items they would like to come to future meetings.
- 5.2 Members discussed the Councillor training programme and commented on the comprehensive nature of the recent induction training undertaken. The importance of refresher training was stressed however, especially for significant topics such as the use of social media and diversity and inclusion. The Committee was informed that the Member training programme was organised by the Committee and Councillor Support Manager and Members could forward on any suggestions for potential future training sessions.

The Meeting ended at 7.24pm

**CHAIRMAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

This page is intentionally left blank



## City of Westminster Standards Committee

<b>Meeting:</b>	Standards Committee
<b>Date:</b>	5 December 2022
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Member Complaints – Annual Report
<b>Report of:</b>	Parveen Akhtar – Director of Law (Monitoring Officer)

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is the Annual report to the Committee setting out, in summary, details of complaints against members of the Council, since the last report to the Committee in November 2021.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the outcomes of the Members complaints referred to in paragraph 3 of the report. No complaints have been referred to the Standards Committee for a hearing.

### 3. Member complaints

- 3.1 This report considers member complaints for the period November 2021 to October 2022. During this period the Monitoring Officer has received three complaints.
- 3.2 One complaint related to a service issue and slow response from a Councillor. The issue was referred to the relevant department to respond to.
- 3.3 One complaint related to when a Councillor was not acting in their capacity as a Councillor and therefore did not meet the criteria.
- 3.4 The third complaint relates to an allegation of breach of data. More information has been requested from the Complainant.

## **4. Training**

- 4.1 Councillors are offered annual training on the Members Code of Conduct. All Members received training on the Code of Conduct following the local elections held in May 2022 and refresher sessions will be held on an annual basis.
- 4.2 Following the review of the Member/Officer Protocol by the Standards Committee this was formally agreed by Council on 9 November 2022. The Committee commented on how the protocol helps support the establishment of good working relationships between Members and Officers in their work together along with their different but complementary roles within the Council. Training on the updated protocol will be provided for all new and existing Members and this will form part of the process of ensuring the behaviours and treatment that each can expect from the other is embedded in the culture throughout the organisation.
- 4.3 The Monitoring Officer will continue to review data and monitor any themes and trends relating to the code of conduct which emerge. Monitoring the number of complaints received and the nature of the complaints will enable the Monitoring Officer and Committee to identify any trends and make recommendations for additional training and guidance as appropriate.
- 4.4 Members of the Standards Committee can also discuss with the Monitoring Officer any further training, linked to the Code of Conduct, they consider will be helpful for Members.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications for this report

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The Council and individual Members are required to promote and maintain high standards of ethical behaviour as is required under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 (“the Act”) Under section of the 28 of the Act, the Council must have in placed “arrangements “ under which allegations that a member or co-opted member of the Council, or of a Committee of Sub-Committee of the Council, has failed to comply with Code of Conduct can be investigated and decisions made on such allegations.

## **7. Carbon Impact**

- 7.1 The decision will have no carbon impact.



## **8. Consultation**

8.1 The report is for information only.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any  
of the Background Papers, please contact:**

Tristan Fieldsend, Senior Committee and Councillor Co-Ordinator

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 December 2022</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>For General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Work Programme 2022-2023</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>The Monitoring Officer</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>There are no financial implications arising from this report</b>
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Tristan Fieldsend, Senior Committee and Councillor Co-ordinator</b> <b>Email: <a href="mailto:tfieldsend@westminster.gov.uk">tfieldsend@westminster.gov.uk</a></b>

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Members are asked to review the proposed work programme for 2022-2023 set out as Appendix 2 to the report and identify any other items it wishes to include on it.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That, having regard to the Committee's Terms of Reference attached as Appendix 1 of this report the Committee indicate any further items it wishes to be added to its future Work Programme.

### **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 The production of a work programme is to enable the Committee to review and update its forthcoming work plan at each of its meetings.
- 3.2 In order to ensure the Committee undertakes its work programme three meetings per annum have been programmed.

### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications.

### **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**If you have any questions about this report, or wish to inspect one of the background papers, please contact:  
Tristan Fieldsend, Senior Committee and Councillor Co-ordinator  
[tfieldsend@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:tfieldsend@westminster.gov.uk)**

Background Papers: None.

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **CONSTITUTION**

5 Members of the Council, 3 Majority Party Members and 2 Minority Party Member.

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- (1) To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Members and Co-opted Members of the City Council.
- (2) To advise the City Council on the adoption or revision of a Code of Conduct for Members.
- (3) Advising, training or arranging to train Members and Co-opted Members on matters relating to the City Council's Code of Conduct for Members.
- (4) To assist Members and Co-opted Members observe the City Council's Code of Conduct for Members.
- (5) To monitor the operation of Code of Conduct for Members.
- (6) Consider reports referred to the Committee by ethical standards officers or the Monitoring Officer of investigations into alleged breaches of the City Council's Code of Conduct for Members.
- (7) Where necessary, to conduct hearings into allegations of breaches of the said code, and interview officers, Members and others as required.
- (8) Determining whether allegations of breaches of the said code are made out and determining what action, if any, to take in relation hereto including, where it is determined that a breach has occurred, deciding what sanctions, if any, should be applied in relation to the Member or Member concerned (and for the avoidance of doubt, the Committee shall only have power to impose any sanction authorised by law).
- (9) Consider any complaints in respect of Members referred to the Committee under the City Council's "Whistleblowing" procedure and determining the action to be taken, if any.
- (10) To the extent allowed by the Law, granting dispensations in relation to Member and co-opted Member interests as referred to in the Members Code of Conduct.
- (11) To consider, advise and, if appropriate, take action upon other Member conduct issues not otherwise dealt with under these terms of reference.

This page is intentionally left blank

# Work Programme 2022/23

## Standards Committee

<b>15 September 2022</b>		
<b>Review of the Member/Officer Protocol</b>	To receive a report on the revised Member/Officer Protocol.	Parveen Akhtar
<b>5 December 2022</b>		
<b>Annual Update on Member Complaints</b>	To receive a report on complaints against members	Parveen Akhtar
<b>Annual Q&amp;A with the Leader of the council on Ethical Standards</b>	To submit questions to the Leader of the Council on Ethical standards in relation to Members	
<b>23 March 2023</b>		
<b>Annual Code of Conduct Review</b>	To receive an annual report reviewing the Code of Conduct	Parveen Akhtar

This page is intentionally left blank