

Standards Committee

11 June 2018 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 2.15 pm at County Hall, Chichester.

Present:

Mr Barnard, Lt Col Barton, Mr Bradford, Mrs Duncton, Mr Smytherman and Mrs Sparkes

Apologies were received from Mr R J Oakley

Absent: Mr Buckland and Mrs Jupp

Also in attendance: Mr Cooper and Mr Donaldson

Part I

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 None declared.

2. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

2.1 Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 March 2018 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Annual Monitoring Report of Complaints Regarding Levels of Service Delivery

3.1 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director, Communities and Public Protection and Director of Communities (copy appended to the signed minutes) which outlined complaints and compliments received by the County Council in the last two years, including the learning from them.

3.2 The report was introduced by David Tominey, Complaints Manager, who advised that the 2016 and 2017 data had been presented in a new dashboard format, following a detailed review. Compliments were being more routinely recorded as well as better quality complaints information. Learning from complaints was included in the report and levels seemed to be reasonably stable.

3.3 The Committee highlighted the importance of recording complaints accurately and acting on the learning. It welcomed assurances that expected levels of customer service were being highlighted to contractors to improve consistency of complaints handling across contracted services. In response to questions from the Committee, Mr Tominey reported that one of the main problems for the Council at the moment was for customers to receive responses within agreed corporate timescales. He highlighted that senior managers were now receiving monitoring information so that late responses could be chased.

3.4 The Committee asked if customers were surveyed following the conclusion of complaints. Mr Tominey confirmed that this had been introduced as an automatic follow-up from May 2018, to obtain a better understanding of people's satisfaction or otherwise.

3.5 The Chairman invited any members with comments on how to improve the format of the reports to contact Mr Tominey direct with their suggestions.

3.6 Resolved – That the report be noted.

4. Review of the Constitution - Codes of Conduct

4.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to signed minutes) which set out proposed revisions to the Constitution.

4.2 The report was introduced by Charles Gauntlett, Senior Advisor, Democratic Services. He advised that the Constitution was undergoing a thorough revision to make it clearer and to reduce duplication. The Codes of Conduct had been reviewed and several pieces of advice currently held outside the Codes of Conduct would be put into it so that it was all in one place. It was also proposed to take several corporate and HR policies out of the Constitution altogether, to be held elsewhere.

4.3 The Committee welcomed the proposed changes but hoped that officers would be mindful of the rules of the Constitution, particularly the Member and Officer Relations Protocol. Mr Gauntlett confirmed that these rules would be publicised after the changes to the Constitution were confirmed and that key points were raised at every staff induction meeting.

4.4 Resolved –

- (1) That the proposed revisions to the Code of Conduct included in Part 5 sections 1 and 2 be supported for submission to the County Council for approval.
- (2) That the proposed removal of Part 5 sections 8-13 and the proposed removal of the corporate advice notes be supported for submission to the County Council for approval.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Director of Human Resources to make and amend future policies relating to staff conduct in consultation with the Director of Law and Assurance.

5. Standards Committee Annual Report

5.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes), which provided a draft annual report of the committee's work during 2017/18 for submission to the County Council.

5.2 Resolved – That the draft Annual Report be approved for submission to the County Council on 20 July 2018.

6. Confidential Reporting Policy

6.1 The Committee noted that the Director of Law and Assurance had not received any referrals via this policy since the last meeting of the Committee.

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1 The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting would be held at 2.15 p.m. on Monday 5 November 2018 at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

Chairman