



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Standards Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **Tuesday 15th November, 2016**, Rooms 3 & 4 - 17th Floor, Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6 QP.

Members Present: Councillors Judith Warner (Chairman), Ian Adams, David Boothroyd, Ruth Bush, Brian Connell and Louise Hyams

Also Present: Baroness Julia Neuberger

Apologies for Absence: Sir Stephen Lamport and Mr Gerard McEvilly

1 MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes to the membership.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3 MINUTES (7.7.16)

- 3.1 Members were pleased to note that following a discussion at the last Committee meeting an Action Tracker had been introduced to monitor previous decisions/action requests. Councillor Ian Adams suggested it could be developed further through introducing target dates for actions, an approach used by the Scrutiny and Audit and Performance Committees.

Action: The Head of Committee and Governance Services to restructure the Action Tracker.

4 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - UPDATE (SEE REPORT OF THE MEMBERS SERVICES MANAGER)

- 4.1 The Committee considered a report by Janis Best, Members Services Manager, who joined the meeting for the debate on this item and answered Members' questions in connection with the report.
- 4.2 The report provided information on the first sessions of the Member Development Programme which had been produced in consultation with Members. Janis Best informed the Committee that it was proposed to hold three bespoke Member Development sessions per annum with the first session having already been held on 13 October 2016 on Personal Safety.
- 4.3 The Committee noted that only five Westminster City Councillors had attended the Personal Safety session and highlighted the importance of ensuring information was disseminated in an efficient way to ensure all Councillors were aware of future sessions. Councillor Ian Adams suggested that future training sessions be programmed into the civic diary alongside Committee meeting dates to provide Councillors with as much notice as possible.
- 4.4 The Committee was interested to know why an external company had facilitated the recent training on Personal Safety. Janis Best explained that the external company had been highly recommended from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council (RBKC). RBKC already had an established Member Development Programme system in place and recent discussions had been undertaken with them to learn how to establish a similar model at Westminster City Council (WCC). Members were particularly interested to note that RBKC had introduced a steering group comprised of Councillors and officers in order to develop and implement a suitable programme for Councillors. The introduction of a more structured training programme was welcomed by the Committee who suggested that in-house training and future opportunities to hold joint training sessions with RBKC be explored further.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the commencement of the programme and the future 2017 training sessions on Scrutiny and FOI/Data Protection Governance and ITC Governance be noted; and
3. That the development of a structured Member Development Programme be noted.

Action: 1) The Head of Committee and Governance Services and Member Services Manager to programme Councillor training sessions into the civic diary; and

- 2) A single database detailing all training provided to Cllrs be produced.

5 OUTSIDE BODIES - GOVERNANCE (SEE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW)

- 5.1 The Committee considered a report by Tasnim Shawkat, Director of Law, introduced the item and answered members' questions in connection with the report.
- 5.2 The report provided details of a proposed addition to the Council's Constitution relating to Outside Bodies which had the intention of making members more aware of the different memberships of outside bodies and any potential legal issues which may arise.
- 5.3 The Committee was pleased to note that a list of outside bodies and the status of the council representative on each one had been produced as it provided clarity on the Councillors role. It was considered further clarity was required though on those organisations where a Councillor was appointed as an individual and not in their capacity as an elected member. It was felt that even though they were acting in their individual capacity it could lead to some possible or perceived conflict. Following discussions with Baroness Neuberger the Committee requested that a supplementary list of organisations Councillors had declared they were members of in their register of interests be produced in order to increase transparency.
- 5.4 Councillor Ian Adams suggested that in order to ensure the outside bodies list was as comprehensive as possible it should also include which Councillor was appointed to the organisation, the length of the appointment and when it would be due for reappointment. It was noted that at other local authorities the appointments to outside bodies was published in the Annual Council papers. Members were of the opinion that this should also be the case at WCC in order to improve transparency and clarity to the process.
- 5.5 The Committee considered that the proposed addition to the Council's constitution regarding outside bodies was very important. It was noted though that the addition was very technical and the possibility of producing a simple, one page guide to the potential issues of being appointed to an outside body should be explored. This could then be circulated to all Councillors to raise awareness of the types of appointment and the various potential legal issues which could arise.

RESOLVED: That the Standards Committee's comments on the proposed addition to the Council's Constitution relating to Outside Bodies be referred to the General Purposes Committee for consideration.

Action: 1) A supplementary list of organisations Councillors were appointed to in an individual capacity be produced;

2) The list of outside bodies be updated to include which Councillor was appointed to each organisation, the length of appointment and when the role was due for reappointment;

3) The list of appointments to Outside Bodies be published in future Annual Council papers; and

4) The Communications Team to produce a simple, one page guide for Cllrs on the different types of appointments to Outside Bodies and the potential legal issues involved.

6 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - TRAINING (SEE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW)

6.1 Tasnim Shawkat, Director of Law, introduced the report and answered members' questions in connection with the report.

6.2 The report provided details on the three training sessions held on the Members Code of Conduct following its adoption by Council on 13 July 2016. An overview of the progress being made towards achieving 100% coverage for all Members was detailed.

6.3 The Committee was encouraged to note that approximately thirty Councillors had so far attended the training and the Head of Committee and Governance Services would arrange further sessions for those Councillors who so far had been unable to attend. Feedback from the sessions had been very positive and the Committee remarked that it had been very informative, challenging and engaging.

6.4 Members felt that providing a long notice period for the training and the option of attending one of three sessions had resulted in the positive attendance. At the suggestion of Councillor Bush the Committee agreed to attempt to further improve future attendance at training sessions by, if possible, requesting that at meetings of the Full Council the Lord Mayor announce training details during the Mayoral Communications item.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted; and
2. That a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee following the conclusion of the training sessions.

Action: The Head of Committee and Governance Services to explore the possibility of the Lord Mayor announcing future training session dates at meetings of the Council.

7 WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

7.1 The Chairman reminded Members that a report requesting comments on future ICT training sessions would be coming to the next Standards Committee scheduled for 15 March 2017.

7.2 The Committee noted that the Action Tracker would be further developed by the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the draft Work programme and Action Tracker be noted.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

None.

The Meeting ended at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____