

## **Standards Committee**

**2 March 2017**

Present: Councillor C Johnson (Chair)  
Councillors P Earley, F Lott, P Mason, K Osborne,  
B Pickard and L Spillard.

### **SC21/03/17 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Ms S Gardner and Mr G Clark, Independent Persons.

### **SC22/03/17 Appointment of Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members reported.

### **SC23/03/17 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

### **SC24/03/17 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 December 2016; the minutes of the Standards Sub-Committee meetings held on 15 and 20 December 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **SC25/03/17 Standards Committee Draft Annual Report 2016/17**

A report was received from the Head of Law and Governance which introduced the Standards Committee Draft Annual Report 2016/17 attached at Appendix1 for consideration prior to its finalisation and submission to the Annual Council meeting on 18 May 2017.

At the end of the municipal year the Standards Committee was required to approve the contents of the Draft Annual Report summarising the work of the Committee over the previous year for submission to the Annual Council meeting.

The Committee was responsible for the promotion of ethical standards within the Authority, helping to secure adherence to the Members' Code of Conduct, monitoring the operation of the Code within North Tyneside, promoting and reviewing the Whistleblowing Policy for Members and conducting hearings following investigation and determining complaints made against Councillors in respect of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct, including following requests for review.

The Standards Committee Draft Annual Report 2016/17 attached at Appendix 1 set out the work undertaken by the Standards Committee and its Sub-Committees over the municipal year. The report highlighted the ways in which the Committee had influenced and shaped policy and the promotion and maintenance of ethical standards of conduct by the Elected Mayor, Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor Representatives. A summary of the Committee's Work/Action Plan which was monitored at each meeting was attached at Annex 1.

## Standards Committee

The Standards Committee would consider its work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year at its first meeting of the new year on 8 June 2017. The Committee had recently met informally to discuss the work programme and its development for next year. The suggestions received would be fed into the new work programme for the approval of the Committee.

The Head of Law and Governance in presenting the draft Annual Report highlighted some matters of note with regard to the work of the Committee:

- a. Review of the Authority's Local Arrangements for dealing with Complaints against Members under the Code of Conduct;
- b. Member Development Programme covering training events completed during 2015/16 and 2016/17, and making suggestions for improvement to be incorporated into the Programme;
- c. Members' safety covering the guidance, training and support available to all Members of the Council in relation to their personal safety when undertaking ward business and surgeries;
- d. Regional meetings of Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Standards Committees and Independent Persons;
- e. Programme of standards committee meetings with invited guests, including the Elected Mayor, members of the Senior Leadership Group, Group Leaders, the Chair and Deputy Chair of Council, the Chair of the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee, and the Chairs' of Regulatory Committees, as well as the Chairs of Standards Committees from neighbouring authorities, which has provided an opportunity to discuss priorities in relation to ethical governance and ethical standards.

In 2016/17 the Standards Committee comprised Councillors Jim Allan, Anne Arkle, Peter Earley (Deputy Chair), Carl Johnson (Chair), Frank Lott, Paul Mason, Kate Osborne, Bruce Pickard and Lesley Spillard.

Mr George Clark and Ms Stella Gardner, Independent Person(s), who were first appointed by the Council in July and September 2012 respectively and their appointments extended in July 2014 for a further two years to July 2016, in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. Following a formal recruitment process in 2016, it was agreed by the Council that the appointments held by Mr Clark and Ms Gardner be extended for a further two years until 31 July 2018. Mr Clark and Ms Gardner attended meetings of the Standards Committee as guests of the Committee.

It was proposed by the Head of Law and Governance that amendments to the Standards Committee work programme be undertaken following consideration by Members of the Draft Annual Report at today's meeting, together with the relevant comments/suggestions received at the Committee's recent informal development session.

**Resolved** that (1) any additions and amendments made by the Standards Committee to the draft Annual Report 2016-17 be received;  
(2) the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee, be authorised to finalise the Annual Report 2016-17, taking into account any comments received pursuant to recommendation (1) above, prior to its submission to the Annual Council meeting to be held on 18 May 2017.