

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Ethics Committee held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 14
September 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor S Walsh (Chair)
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor M Mutton (Named Substitute for Councillor D Gannon)
Councillor K Mulhall

Other Members present: Councillor D Skinner (On behalf of the Conservative Group)
Councillor G Williams

Independent Persons: S Atkinson
A Barton
R Wills

Employees (by Directorate):

Place S. Bennett, C Bradford, S Harriott, J Newman

Apologies: Councillors A Andrews, R Bailey and D Gannon and
Mr P Wiseman

Public Business

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July, 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

13. Draft Member/Officer Protocol and Draft Monitoring Officer Protocol

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) appended to which was a draft Member/Officer Protocol for consideration. The Committee noted that the draft Monitoring Officer Protocol would be submitted for consideration at a future meeting.

The report indicated that the Protocol was beneficial for both Members and Officers as it set out for them what was expected in their respective roles, together with what they can expect from each other. While experienced Councillors and Officers may understand and appreciate the different roles that they have, newly elected Members and recently appointed employees may find it helpful to have these roles explained in some detail. Understanding what is, and is not, expected

of each other can assist in maintaining and improving excellent Member/Officer working relationships.

The draft Protocol has been drafted both to reflect current practices within the Council and best practice in other local authorities. It offers guidance on some of the issues which most commonly arise in relation to Member/Officer relationships. It is partly a statement of current practice and convention. In some respects, however, it seeks to promote greater clarity and certainty. In particular, it covers the behaviour that is expected between Members and Officers. The protocol gives guidance only, but it may be taken into account if there is a complaint about a Member or an Officer.

The draft Protocol contains more detailed guidance on matters such as:-

- Complaints
- Member enquiries
- Information and advice
- Member briefings
- Support services

RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- 1) **Supports and agrees the draft Protocol as appended to the report**
- 2) **Recommends that the Constitutional Advisory Panel approves the Member/Officer Protocol and that it then recommends to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities and Council that they agree to the Protocol being included in the Constitution.**

14. Six Monthly Review of Members' Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which outlined details of declarations of gifts and hospitality made by Members since the Committee last reviewed these at its meeting on 17 March, 2017.

RESOLVED that the entries contained in the Registers of Members' Gifts and Hospitality from 1 March to 31 August, 2017 be noted.

15. Six Monthly Review of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which set out the entries in the Registers of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality for the period 1 January to 30 June, 2017.

RESOLVED that the entries contained in the Register of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality for the period 1 January to 30 June, 2017 be noted.

16. Code of Conduct Update

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which provided an update on national issues in relation to the ethical behaviour of

Elected Members and the local position in Coventry with regard to Code of conduct issues.

The Committee discussed three cases from different Councils and noted the outcome for each.

In terms of the local picture, the Committee noted that four new complaints had been received since the last Committee meeting in March, 2017 and that these were being dealt with at Stage 1 by the Monitoring Officer. The Committee also noted that no complaints had been received by the Monitoring Officer in respect of Allesley, Finham or Keresley Parish Councils.

The Committee also noted that there were two Councillors who have not attended Code of Conduct training within the last three years as required and that the Monitoring Officer would be arranging training for those Councillors in a format to suit them.

RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- 1) Notes the cases determined under the standards regime nationally and request that the Monitoring Officer following consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee, shares the case updates with all Elected Members and;**
- 2) Notes the local position relating to the operation of the Council's Code of Conduct and delegates any actions arising from these to the Monitoring Officer, following consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee.**
- 3) Notes that the Monitoring Officer will be writing to the two Councillors who have not undertaken Code of Conduct training to arrange training sessions for them.**

17. Work Programme for the Ethics Committee

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) appended to which was a proposed Work Programme for the Committee for 2017/18.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the proposed Work Programme for Ethics Committee for 2017/8 as appended to the report.

18. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 10.30am)