

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Ethics Committee held at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 26**  
**June 2019**

Present:

Members: Councillor S Walsh (Chair)  
Councillor A Andrews  
Councillor P Hetherington  
Councillor J Mutton  
Councillor D Welsh

Independent Persons: A Barton

Employees (by  
Directorate):

Place: C Bradford, S Harriott, J Newman, C Sinclair

Apologies: S Atkinson  
R Wills  
P Wiseman

### **Public Business**

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2019 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

3. **Annual Report of Ethics Committee 2018/19**

The Committee considered the third Annual Report of the Ethics Committee which set out the work of the Committee over the last municipal year including:

- Further work that the Committee had done in reviewing and revising governance arrangements with the finalisation of a Monitoring Officer Protocol and approval of a Social Media Protocol for Members.
- Consideration of the report by the Committee on Standards in Public Life on local government ethical standards. The Best Practice recommendations from the report would inform the Ethics Committee's work for the coming year (2019/20)
- Preliminary work on a review of the policy and guidance on gifts and hospitality for members and officers.
- A review of ethical standards in parish councils

The report also detailed other, regular work of the Committee over the last year and set out a brief overview of work to be undertaken in the 2019/20 municipal year.

The Ethics Committee approved the Annual Report.

**RESOLVED that the City Council be recommended to:**

- a) **Note the Annual Report of the Ethics Committee**
- b) **Consider whether there is any work within the Committee's terms of reference that Council would wish the Committee to undertake**

**4. Six Monthly Review of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality**

The Committee noted the regular six-monthly update report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services which set out the entries in the Register of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality for the period 1 July to 31 December 2019.

**5. Six Monthly Review of Members' Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality**

The Committee considered the regular six-monthly update report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services which set out details of declarations of gifts and hospitality made by members for the period 1 September 2018 to 28 February 2019.

In noting the report, the Committee asked that Members be reminded to declare all hospitality offered, even if they did not avail of it.

**6. Code of Conduct Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services which updated members on any national issues in relation to the ethical behaviour of elected members and the local position in Coventry regarding Code of Conduct issues.

The Committee noted:

- a) The cases determined under the standards regime nationally
- b) The local position relating to the operation of the Council's Code of Conduct and to delegate any actions arising from these to the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

**7. Work Programme for the Ethics Committee 2019/20**

The Committee considered the 2019/20 Work Programme which detailed proposed topics for the Committee's consideration and the Best Practice work programme which set out the best practice recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

In noting the work programme, the Committee asked questions in respect of the best practice point relating to the inclusion of prohibitions on bullying and harassment in the codes of conduct. Arising from the discussion, it was agreed that the following be circulated to members of the Committee:

- The Newcastle-Upon-Tyne definition of bullying and harassment
- The draft Code of Conduct when it had been updated to include a definition of bullying and harassment.
- The code of conduct as set out in the Constitution for Members and Officers in respect of bullying and harassment with any differences highlighted.

8. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 10.20 am)