

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the virtual meeting of the Committee held on the 11 January 2021 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Pursehouse (Chair), Milton (Vice-Chair), Caulcott, Parker and N.White.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Lockwood, Steeds and Shaun Mundy (Independent Person)

230. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST JULY 2020

These minutes were approved as a correct record.

231. ETHICAL STANDARDS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A report was presented with proposals for developing a new Member Code of Conduct. This included reference to:

- the 2019 report produced by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) on 'Local Government Ethical Standards'; and
- the Model Councillor Code of Conduct produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) in December 2020 following a consultation exercise with the Local Government sector (to which the Standards Committee responded following its meeting on 21st July 2020).

The Committee's comments on the report's recommendations included:

- support for the Member Code of Conduct workshop with a request for a tracked change document to be produced to identify changes;
- the importance of a revised induction training plan for new members, including the possible use of a mentoring programme;
- the possible introduction of a continuous personal development plan for all members supported by the Council;
- shared values between officers and members should be explored;
- clarification of the role of a chairman should be considered with respect to the implementation of standards and adherence to the code of conduct during meetings with the possibility of providing training if required;
- requesting assistance from Group Leaders in managing behaviour of their Members;
- clarity was required as to the sanction that are available for breaching the Code of Conduct;

- training should be delivered across the year, not just at induction, and should cover areas such as standing orders, code of conduct, the constitution, Council procedures, communication, safeguarding, planning and representing the community.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the Committee notes:
 - (i) the new Model Councillor Code of Conduct approved by the Local Government Association ('LGA'); and
 - (ii) the intention to convene a Member workshop to review a draft revised Member Code of Conduct for this Council, informed by the Model Code, and then to bring an updated draft to Committee for approval;
- B. training should be undertaken by all Councillors in relation to the new Member Code of Conduct, once agreed;
- C. the Committee make recommendations to inform the planning of induction training to be delivered in May 2021.
- D. that the Committee consider and keep under review the Council's arrangements for openness and transparency related to all matters of ethical standards.
- E. that the Committee ask Group Leaders to lead discussions in their respective groups on the actions they will each take to build and maintain an ethical culture in Tandridge Council; and
- F. that the Committee consider any further actions to be taken by the Committee, by Group Leaders and by all Councillors, to build and maintain an ethical culture in Tandridge.

232. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

On 21 July 2020, the Committee had approved a draft Member Development Plan for 2020/21 and had agreed to promote and champion Member engagement with the opportunities set out in the plan. A progress report was submitted to inform the Committee about the subsequent Member development sessions that had taken place.

It had not been possible to deliver all of the intended sessions to date due insufficient officer capacity and staff absence. However, it was still intended to complete both the safeguarding and planning refresher training before May 2021. The potential to deliver training to assist Members with their casework would be revisited, while a session on 'Being a Community Leader' would be re-programmed for 2021. Training issues regarding the role of the Committee and the Code of Conduct were addressed by the 'Ethical Standards on Local Government' item elsewhere on the agenda.

The Committee discussed what steps could be taken to encourage full participation in Member development sessions, together with the merits of publishing (on the Council's website) a record of training undertaken by each Member.

Member development plans for 2021/22 were also discussed, including arrangements for the 2021 new Member induction programme.

It was suggested that training should be completed with both officers and Members present in order to develop an understanding between both groups. It was also noted that a training plan for officers was also being developed. It was agreed that, in respect of recommendations A ii), A iii), B and D any additional suggestions to those listed in the resolution can be emailed to officers after the meeting for inclusion in the Member Development Plan.

RESOLVED – that:

- A.
 - i) progress in delivering the Member Development Plan be noted;
 - ii) the following additional topics be considered for inclusion in the ongoing Member Development Plan: combined values and behaviours workshop, equality, diversity and inclusion training, unconscious bias, training for Chairman, and safeguarding;
 - iii) the following additional topics be the subject of future pre-Committee meeting briefings for Councillors: subjects specific to items on committee agendas and specific resident services, such as how to get on the housing register, for example;
- B. the following steps can be taken to encourage full participation in Member development sessions: example set by Standard Committee Members by attending session and promotion of training by Group Leaders;
- C. a record of training undertaken by each Member be published on the Council's website;
- D. the following additional topics be included in the 2021 Member Induction programme: training for Chairmen, and safeguarding.

Rising 8.41 pm