

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018****STANDARDS COMMITTEE****2 July 2018****COUNCIL****18 July 2018****CLASSIFICATION:****Open****WARD(S) AFFECTED****All Wards****Suki Binjal  
Director Legal and Governance**

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report gives an overview of the work and activities of the Standards Committee over the past year and provides information on the monitoring of the Members' Code of Conduct.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That the Standards Committee considers the Annual Report for 2017/18, as attached at Appendix 1, and endorse it for submission to Full Council.**
- 2.2 **That Full Council notes the Standards Committee's Annual Report for 2017/18, as attached at Appendix 1.**

## **3. RELATED DECISIONS**

- 3.1 This is the sixth Annual Report of the Standards Committee established by the Council on 1 July 2012.

## **4. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES**

- 4.1 This report sets out the work and activities of the Standards Committee over the previous municipal year and therefore does not contain any potential financial implications.

## **5. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE**

- 5.1 The Council has a legal duty under the Localism Act 2011, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of Members and co-opted Members in public office.
- 5.2 The Council therefore established a Standards Committee to help promote and uphold high standards of conduct amongst Members and co-opted Members.

## **6. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

- 6.1 This Annual Report is submitted to Council in line with best practice for the Council to maintain an overview of the work of the Standards Committee. This is the sixth Annual Report of the Standards Committee established by the Council following implementation of the Localism Act 2011 and the introduction of related ethical governance arrangements.
- 6.2 In upholding high standards the Committee monitors and makes recommendations on the Members' Code of Conduct and considers complaints made under the Code.

6.3 The Standards Committee during 2017/18 undertook work in the following areas, which are explained in further detail in Appendix 1 of this report:

- Annual Report on Compliance with Guidance on Members' Use of ICT
- Review of the Register of Members' and Co-optees Declaration of interests
- Review of the Members' Training and Development Programme
- Safety arrangements for Member surgeries

**Tim Shields**  
**Chief Executive**

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Standards Committee Annual Report 2017/18

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**STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

**Introduction from Councillor Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the Committee for 2017/18 and Cabinet Member for ethical governance matters**

This report provides an overview of the Committee's work in the 2017/18 Municipal Year, in what was the Committee's sixth year since its establishment by the Council following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011. This Annual Report outlines the key areas of work undertaken by the Committee during 2017/18 as well as looking at future work and challenges.

This is my second annual report since taking on responsibility for this Committee. I am happy to report that Members and co-opted members continue to uphold high ethical standards. I am also pleased to report that the refreshed Members' training programme which was launched last year had positive feedback.

It is yet again regrettable that the opposition parties decided not to take up their places on the Standards Committee for the 2017/18 Municipal Year. The Committee functions in an independent and non-party political way. It will continue to retain the place for the now sole opposition party for the duration of this new municipal administration in the hope that it will be taken up.

## **2. Membership**

For 2017/18, membership of the Committee was as follows:

- Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Deputy Mayor, Elected Chair of the Committee.
- Six non-executive Council Members – Councillors Katie Hanson, Ben Hayhurst, Clayeon McKenzie, Sally Mulready, Clare Potter and Jessica Webb (vice-chair); and
- Six non-voting co-opted members – Julia Bennett, (resigned 13 February 2018) George Gross, (resigned 2 Feb 2018 ) Adedoja Labinjo and Onagete Louison (plus two vacancies).
- There remained One Conservative and one Liberal Democrat vacancy on the committee.

The table below outlines Members' and co-optees' attendance at meetings of the Standards Committee meetings during the 2016/17 Municipal Year. As

ever, Members and co-optees had a large number of alternative commitments such as other public meetings, ward commitments, representing the Council on outside bodies and work commitments, and were therefore not always available to attend every meeting of the Committee

Member	24/05/17 Extraordinary meeting	10/07/17	12/02/18
Julia Bennett	N	A	P
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	P	P	P
George Gross	N	A	Resigned 2 Feb
Cllr Katie Hanson	P	P	P
Cllr Ben Hayhurst	P	P	P
Adedoja Labinjo	N	A	P
Onagete Louison	N	A	P
Cllr Clayeon McKenzie	P	P	A
Cllr Sally Mulready	P	A	A
Cllr Clare Potter	P	P	A
Jonathan Stopes-Roe	N	P	A
Cllr Jessica Webb (Vice Chair)	P	P	P

Key:

P = Present

N = Not required to attend

A = Apologies for absence

### 3. Terms of reference 2017/18

The Standards Committee operated within the following terms of reference for 2017/18 Municipal Year, which went to the Standards Committee meeting on 10 July 2017:

The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high ethical standards at the Council. The Standards Committee is responsible for the following functions:

1. To review and maintain oversight of the Council's ethical framework and procedures and make reports and recommendations accordingly;
2. To review and maintain oversight of the conduct of Members and co-opted members of the Council and assist them in upholding high ethical standards;
3. To advise Full Council and its Committees on the adoption of a Members' Code of Conduct, codes of practice and protocols relating to ethical governance matters;
4. To hear and consider complaints made against Members and co-opted members under the Code of Conduct, codes of practice or protocols;
5. To adopt procedures for considering complaints made under the Code of Conduct, codes of practice or protocols;
6. To consider whether to grant applications for dispensation to Members and co-opted members, in accordance with Members' Code of Conduct; and
7. To maintain oversight of ethical governance training provided to Members and co-opted members and make reports and recommendations accordingly.

#### **4. Members' Code of Conduct**

All Members on their election to office and co-optees on their appointment are required to sign a declaration confirming that they will abide by the Members' Code of Conduct. It is important for them to have good knowledge of the requirements of the Code. Similarly, officers who work directly with Members and co-optees need to have a good understanding of the Code in order to give Members effective support.

The Committee is pleased with the support and training provided to Members on the Code of Conduct and believes that it helps contribute to the high ethical governance standards demonstrated by Members and Co-optees of the Council. It is expected that Members and Co-opted Members will attend refresher sessions during the next Municipal Year. The Committee will continue to monitor training on the Code of Conduct to ensure that high standards continue.

#### **5. Member Induction, Training and Development Programme**

The refreshed Member Training and Development Programme received positive feedback. The programme's aim was to provide the necessary training and tools to Members to enable them to reach their full potential in their various roles as Councillors. The change in approach had come about as

a result of Mayor Philip Glanville's commitment to launch a review of how Councillors are supported. The training is now more focused with the emphasis on a more individual approach to training to meet Members' needs and aspirations. A dedicated Members' training page was created and is live. It includes links to all the main components, including the Local Government Association and Local Government and Intelligence Unit learning hub, dates of briefings and back to floor session, PDP templates and guidance, as well as key contacts.

Committee members welcomed the new training programme. Work would continue to improve the various ways to support Councillors in their professional and personal development.

A number of courses had been run for the 2017/2018 Municipal year. These courses included:

- Safeguarding Training
- Housing Medical Team – Assessment Process
- Employment and Skills Briefing
- Community Safety Enforcement and Business Regulations
- Briefing on the Integrated Communities Programme
- Member Discussion – making facilities more inclusive of trans and non-binary people.

## **6. Review of Register of Declaration of Interests Forms**

The Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 requires all local authorities to adopt a Code of Conduct and for all its all Members and voting co-optees to complete and return a declaration of interests form.

The Localism Act 2011 also places an obligation on all local authorities to promote high ethical standards in public office. Regulations also require Members and Co-optees to be transparent and declare all disclosable interests on their declaration of interest form.

A review of the Register of Interests Forms revealed that although the majority of Councillors had kept their forms up to date there was still a small number of Councillors who had not updated their forms since 2014. However, following the election every Councillor had submitted a new form and a review of these was underway. A review of the form and guidance would also take place over the course of the next few months.

A quarterly reminder would be sent to all Councillors to ensure that they reviewed their forms on a quarterly basis. The Committee noted that the declaration of interest forms are held in a hard copy register and on the Council's website.

## **8. Complaints about Member Conduct**

Jonathan Stopes-Roe continued to serve as the Council's Independent Person on ethical governance matters and he was reappointed by Full Council for a further 4 year term at its meeting on 26 July 2017.

There were no complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct that were referred to the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee in the 2017/2018 Municipal Year.

## **9. Guidance for Members on Use of ICT – Annual Report**

Throughout 2017 communications were provided to members to support them in compliance with the requirements for use of Council ICT systems. These included:

- Notification about new Using Systems and Data policy, invitation to attend Data Protection guidance sessions for members and contact details for queries
- Information about registration of Members as Data Controllers with the Information Commissioner's Office
- Invitation to attend ICT support and advice sessions

The Standards Committee members noted that there had been two incidents relating to Members' use of the Council's ICT systems during 2017. In these incidents the Council's ICT teams had initiated a remote wipe of the data on the Council IT devices.

On data protection, the Standards Committee members noted that the Council had arranged to register each Member as a 'Data Controller' with the Information Commissioner's Office. This was a mandatory requirement for all Members and will be renewed by the Council following the election in May 2018 and annually thereafter to ensure that Members' registration remains up to date.

The Standards Committee noted that guidance sessions had been offered to all members in autumn 2017 to support them in their understanding of Data Protection responsibilities. Feedback from these sessions had been positive and they had provided officers with additional understanding of members' work and helped to identify those ways that needed further improvement. .

## **10. Dispensation Requests**

Under the Council's dispensation Procedure, the Standards Committee is responsible for considering requests for dispensations on the grounds that it is in the interests of residents or that it is otherwise appropriate to grant dispensation for some other reason.



There were no requests for dispensation put to the Standards Committee during the 2017/18 period.

## **11. Committee of Standards in Public Life**

The Committee of Standards in Public Life went out to consultation on Local Government Ethical Standards earlier this year. The consultation closed last month and when the analysis of this consultation is available it will be brought to the Standards Committee and any recommendations will be discussed.

## **12. Conclusion**

The Standards Committee has now been in operation for six years following its establishment by Council. The Committee remains dedicated to maintaining high ethical standards in Hackney and supporting Members and co-optees in doing so. The Committee is pleased to see that the current framework is operating successfully and the Committee believes that Council Members and co-optees continue to demonstrate high ethical standards.

The Committee's ongoing focus will be to support Members to ensure that they are fully aware of the principles of the Code of Conduct and to monitor attendance at training and completion of Register of Interests' forms.

I thank the four co-optees of the Committee for their assistance and hard work on the Committee and the Independent Person, Mr Jonathan Stopes-Roe, for his contribution to our work.

**Councillor Anntoinette Bramble**  
**Chair of Standards Committee 2017/18**