

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ETHICS AND STANDARDS

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

12TH SEPTEMBER 2019 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: S Miah (Chairman), A L L'Huillier (Vice-Chairman), B S Dawes, S Griffiths, I Hardiman and K Henderson.

Independent Member: T J Hipkiss.

Co-opted Member: Mr R Reynolds.

Parish Council Representatives: Councillors R Drew and W Mack

Observers:

Councillors: C E E Edginton-White and L Whitehouse.

ES.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor: N Gale, Reverend J Cox (Co-opted Member) and Parish Councillor representative D Killingworth.

ES.2 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor K Henderson was a substitute for Councillor N Gale.

ES.3 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

ES.4 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ES.5 Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman 2018/19

The Committee received a report from the Chief Executive on the outcome of complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in accordance with Council Policy for the period of 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

The Solicitor to the Council said the report was very good news. She added that the authority had robust policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints. She said Officers invested a lot of time in achieving a resolution at a local level.

The Solicitor to the Council assured Members that all complaints had been dealt with fairly and she had no cause for concern.

Agreed: The report be noted.

ES.6 Local Government Ethical Standards

The Committee considered a report from the Solicitor to the Council on a Review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) into Local Government Ethical Standards.

The Solicitor to the Council presented the report and advised Members that In January 2019 the Authority received the Review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life CSPL into Local Government Ethical Standards. The committee concluded that high standards of conduct in local government are needed to protect the integrity of decision-making, maintain public confidence, and safeguard local democracy.

Members were advised that there is also evidence of persistent or repeated misconduct by a minority of councillors, and the CSPL report records that many codes of conduct fail to address adequately important areas of behaviour such as social media use and bullying and harassment.

The Committee considered each page of the proposed draft Code of Conduct in turn, and were content that it met the CSPL best practice recommendations.

The Chairman advised that the revised Code of Conduct would be recommended to Council for adoption in December 2019.

Agreed: Delegated authority be given to the Solicitor to the Council to make appropriate changes to the Code of Conduct to reflect the CSPL Best Practice Recommendations.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.23pm.