

# **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THURSDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER, 2018**

**PRESENT:-**

**Independent Members:** Susan Toland (Chair),

**Parish Representatives:** Tony Crouch and Veronica Packham

**Bath and North East Somerset Councillors:** Sally Davis, Sarah Bevan, Geoff Ward and Brian Simmons

**Officers:** Maria Lucas (Director of Legal and Democratic), Enfys Hughes and Jeff Wring (Head of Audit West)

**Independent Person:** Tony Drew

#### **11 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed Jeff Wring (Audit Services) to the meeting.

#### **12 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair invited the Clerk to announce the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION**

Apologies had been submitted from Cyril Davies and Nigel Roberts.

#### **14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **15 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

##### Training session

The Monitoring Officer asked the Chair if a short training session might be possible at the end of the meeting. Having sought the views of those present, who were in agreement, the Chair announced that there would be a training session.

##### Complaints procedure

The Monitoring Officer explained that as requested by the Standards Committee, the criteria for considering complaints had been amended to state:

If appropriate, the Monitoring Officer will then go on to apply the following criteria in deciding whether a complaint should be investigated, dealt with informally or rejected:

- Whether the complaint is about something that happened over 6 months ago as those involved are not likely to remember it clearly enough to provide credible evidence, or where the lapse of time means there would be little benefit or point in taking action now.

**RESOLVED** all to note.

**16 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS (COMPLAINTS MUST GO THROUGH THE STANDARDS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE)**

There were no items from the public.

**17 ITEMS FROM COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTED AND ADDED MEMBERS RELATING TO THE GENERAL BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no items from Councillors.

**18 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 19TH JULY 2018**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Monitoring Officer explained in respect of the procedure when dealing with a complaint at a meeting, that unless there was a disagreement about the facts of the case, it was not necessary for the Committee to adjourn provided the meeting clearly minuted the facts they had found in respect of the complaint.

It was agreed that the exempt minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018 be submitted to the next meeting.

**19 ANNUAL REPORT ON COMMISSION FOR LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN ENGLAND (LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN) COMPLAINTS**

The Monitoring Officer presented the report and explained there were no clear trends. It was noted that there were more complaints upheld in adult social care and education and children but these areas would be anticipated to generate more serious complaints

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Review and determinations made by the Ombudsman be noted.

**20 REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS**

The Committee considered the report from the Monitoring Officer. They noted her comments in respect of gifts and hospitality and declaring an interest.

**RESOLVED** that the report on the assessment of complaints be noted.

**21 WORKPLAN FOR THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

It was suggested that the date of the May 2019 meeting be changed due to the elections. The Democratic Services Officer would liaise with the Chair and Monitoring Officer and look for a date in June.

**RESOLVED** to note the workplan.

## **22 TRAINING SESSION - CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Code of Conduct scenarios had been circulated to members to consider. The meeting discussed the answers to the scenarios, the issues raised and relevant recent case law.

The scenarios and answers would be circulated to members of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**