

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 23 JUNE 2022**

**COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE  
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

John Pulford MBE                      Chair  
Councillor Shafi Ahmed  
Councillor Amin Rahman  
Councillor Abu Chowdhury

**Members In Attendance Virtually:**

Councillor Sabina Akhtar  
Councillor Sirajul Islam  
Councillor Asma Begum

**Co-optees Present in Person:**

Fiona Browne

**Co-optees In Attendance Virtually:**

Mike Houston  
Amanda Orchard                      Independent Person (IP)  
Rachael Tiffin                          Independent Person (IP)

**Officers Present in Person:**

Janet Fasan                              (Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)  
Patricia Attawia                        (Democratic Services Team Leader, Civic &  
Members, Governance)  
Justina Bridgeman                      Democratic Services Officer (Committees)  
Matthew Mannion                        (Head of Democratic Services)

**Officers In Attendance Virtually:**

Jill Bayley                                (Head of Legal Safeguarding)  
Agnes Adrien                              (Head of Litigation, Legal Services)

**1. TO ELECT A CHAIR FOR 2022-23**

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services Governance, requested nominations for the position of Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee from amongst the Co-opted Members for the municipal year 2022/2023.

Fiona Browne proposed John Pulford for the position. This was seconded by Councillor Shafi Ahmed and Councillor Amin Rahman.

There were no further nominations.

The Standards Advisory Committee;

RESOLVED

That John Pulford was elected as Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee for the municipal year 2022-23.

**2. TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIR FOR 2022-23**

The Chair requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee from amongst the Co-opted Members for the municipal year 2022-23.

John Pulford nominated Fiona Browne as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Amin Rahman.

There were no further nominations.

The Standards Advisory Committee;

RESOLVED

That Fiona Browne was re-elected as Vice-Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee for the municipal year 2022-23.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

**4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)**

That the minutes of the 25 November 2021 and notes of the informal meeting 10 February 2022 were approved by the Chair as correct records of proceedings

## **5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **5.1 Standards Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference**

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services, Governance, introduced the report, which detailed the Committee's Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meetings for the year 2022-23. The report requested Members approval of its Sub-Committees to consider complaints relating to breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.

Fiona Browne requested clarification on the Committee procedures rules 3.1 (a) Roles and Functions with regards to the complaints screening process. The Committee procedures will be added to the work plan for review.

RESOLVED

1. That any additions or amendments be noted.

### **5.2 Standards Advisory Committee Report to Council**

The Committee reviewed the annual report to Council submitted by Jill Bayley, Head of Safeguarding, which detailed the activities of the Committee over the last year, highlighting any relevant issues to Council. The Committee were asked to consider the draft annual report and feedback on any last updates before the report is presented to Council in July 2022.

Fiona requested an amendment to the report, as it named Nafisa Adam as vice-chair which was incorrect. The Committee approved the report for submittance to the next Council meeting pending amendments.

RESOLVED

1. That the Standards Advisory Committee Report be added to the Council meeting agenda.
2. That the report be noted.

### **5.3 Register of Gifts and Hospitality - Quarterly Update**

Patricia Attawia, Democratic Services Team Leader, Civic & Members Governance, introduced the update on Member gifts and hospitality, submitted by Members since the previous report on 10 February 2022. There were no declarations received during 1 February to 31 May 2022 due to the purdah period before the local elections and was similar to the pattern seen in 2018.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.

#### **5.4 Member Attendance Update**

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services, Governance, introduced the update on Member and Co-optee attendance at formal Council and Committee meetings for comment and review.

Following the presentation, the Committee noted:

- Clarification of the co-opted Members for scrutiny committee meetings.
- Clarification on the recruitment of co-opted members of the Standards Advisory Committee.
- Concerns were raised with the number of Members not attending mandatory seminars, such as Ethics and Probity.
- Recommended that the Code of Conduct should be linked into all training and Members should make themselves available.
- Clarification on attendance expectations for co-optees and Members.

Matthew confirmed that recruitment is currently underway for co-opted Scrutiny Committee members. Further details on timings for recruiting Standards Advisory Committee co-optees will be submitted for review.

Training for co-optees will be arranged once recruitment has completed. Matthew said that a number of induction sessions are specific to new Members. He requested formal confirmation of the request to consult with Overview and Scrutiny on adding co-optee member Attendance Expectations to the Code of Conduct. This can then be considered by the Committee as part of its annual review of the Code.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.

#### **5.5 Dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011**

Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, introduced the report on dispensations in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI's) under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011. The Committee were requested to note the general dispensations granted by the Monitoring Officer specified in Paragraph 3.5 of the report.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.

#### **5.6 Code of Conduct for Members - Complaint Monitoring and Associated Matters**

Janet Fasan next introduced the report on the quarterly monitoring information for complaints and investigations, which related to alleged breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. A brief overview of the complaints

process was provided for new Members of the Committee, including possible breaches.

Following the presentation, the Committee noted;

- Clarification on any guidance to Members regarding Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) complaints.
- Clarification on the roles, responsibilities and purpose regarding the complaints process and how clear this is for Members.

Matthew Mannion said that guidance on handling penalty charge notice complaints will be added to the Members Hub for review. Janet said the complaints process has an educational objective in nature for Members to be aware of public perception. Amanda Orchard said the process is designed to be fair and transparent, rather than punitive. If complaints start to rise a review may be necessary.

Agnes Adrien, Head of Litigation, gave an overview of the PCN complaint received. The complainant has yet to respond to letters from the Council and is still pending. They will be sent further requests to reply, if none are forthcoming an official request to close the complaint will be made. Jill Bayley, Head of Safeguarding and Deputy Monitoring Officer, gave an overview of the allegation of mishandling a racially motivated incident. This complaint has now been closed.

RESOLVED

1. To add guidance on PCN complaints to the Members Hub.
2. That the report be noted.

## **6. WORK PLAN**

Matthew Mannion presented details of the work plan for the new municipal year 2022-23. Further comments and suggestions should be forwarded to Matthew for review.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was none.

## **8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Nil items.

**9. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR  
CONSIDERS URGENT**

None noted.

The meeting ended at 7.37 p.m.

Chair, John Pulford MBE  
Standards Advisory Committee