

Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

25 September 2020

Subject:	Appointment to Ethical Standards Sub-Committees, Standards Working Group and Member Development Working Group
Director:	Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer - Surjit Tour
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Surjit Tour Surjit_tour@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee:

2.1 Appoints to two Ethical Standards Sub-Committees for the 2020/21 municipal year, with flexibility between membership to cater for availability and workload, with delegated powers to carry out the functions set out in the following terms of reference, and with the membership set out below:

Terms of reference of the Ethical Standards Sub Committee

- To consider investigation reports referred to it by the Monitoring Officer.
- To conduct hearings (including the imposition of sanctions).

Membership

SUB-COMMITTEE 1		SUB-COMMITTEE 2	
Member	Substitute	Member	Substitute
Ahmed	Substitute members taken from remainder of committee	Ahmed	Substitute members taken from remainder of committee
Hevican		P Hughes	
Bostan		Mabena	
Simms		Dhallu	
Horton		Hevican	
+ Independent Person		+ Independent Person	

2.2 In view of the change in Committee membership, review the appointment of members to the Standards Working Group (Vice Chair + 4 members) and the Member Development Working Group (Vice Chair + 4 members).

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires authorities to adopt arrangements for dealing with complaints about breaches of the Member Code of Conduct. The Council's arrangements for dealing with complaints provide for a Sub-Committee of the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee to consider investigation reports referred to it by the Monitoring Officer and to conduct hearings (including the imposition of sanctions).
- 1.2 The Council at its annual meeting held on 21 May 2019 agreed the membership of the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee. As two vacancies arose on the Committee, the Emergency Committee gave approval to the appointment of two additional members to the Committee on 18 August 2020. The Committee now needs to make appointments to the Ethical Standards Sub Committees for the remainder of the municipal year.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 9 March 2018, the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee gave approval to the establishment of a Standards Working Group to review to Council's Ethical Framework. The Committee is requested to review which members are appointed to the Group, alongside the Vice Chair. The current membership is Councillors Ahmed (Vice Chair), Dhallu, Hevican, P Hughes and Simms (+ the two independent persons).
- 1.4 At its meeting on 3 November 2017, the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee gave approval to the establishment of a Member Development Working Group to support the development, implementation and delivery of a revised Elected Member Development Programme. The Committee is requested to appoint four members, in addition to the Vice Chair, to the Group.
- 1.5 The working groups are not decision-making bodies but will enable matters and issues to be discussed and explored, and reports being prepared for the consideration of the Committee in due course.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 High standards of conduct are an essential part of good corporate governance and this in turn has a direct relationship with the delivery of high quality services.

3 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

4 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Section 28(6) of the Localism Act 2011 provides that a relevant authority must have in place arrangements under which allegations that a member or co-opted member of the authority has failed to comply with the authority's code of conduct can be investigated, and arrangements under which decisions on allegations can be made. There is no statutory requirement as to the nature of these arrangements.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

6 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The Committee is required to appoint members to the sub-committees to ensure relevant standards complaints are effectively addressed.
- 6.2 The Committee is not required to have a working group to review the Ethical Framework, however it is considered good practice to periodically review the Code of Conduct and Arrangements for dealing with complaints and a working group provides a helpful way to undertake such a review. A working group also enables broader discussion and debate to take place on how the Council can promote and maintain higher standards of conduct.

Surjit Tour

Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer