

Minutes of Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

**Tuesday 1 November 2022 at 3:00pm
in Committee Room 1, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Allcock (Chair)
Councillor Crompton, Jalil, Lewis and Rahman.
Mr John Tew and Mr Richard Phillips (Independent Persons).

Officers: Surjit Tour (Director of Law and Governance – Monitoring Officer), Elaine Newsome (Service Manger – Democracy), Vanessa Mahersmith (Governance and Business Support Principal Lead & Solicitor), Trisha Newton (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and John Swann (Democratic Services Officer)

37/22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors E M Giles, G Gill and W Gill.

38/22 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

39/22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

40/22 **Additional Items of Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider.

41/22 **DBS Checks for Elected Members**

Further to Minute Nos. 6/22 (22 February 2022) and 18/22 (22 March 2022), the Committee recommended that Basic DBS Checks were undertaken by all members and enhanced checks provided for those in selected roles.

Following benchmarking exercises with other local authorities, the Committee reviewed responses from elected members, with 96.9% of those surveyed in favour consenting to a voluntary DBS Check; (Response rate of 58.3%).

There was currently no allocated Council budget for DBS checks for elected members, the cost of which was estimated at £1,936 per annum. Different options for payment included: payment from council budget, payment from allowances and a combination of both. It was agreed by the Committee that a decision regarding payment should be deferred until the Independent Remuneration Panel met to examine options.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval be given to progress with the implementation of DBS Checks for elected members;
- (2) that the Independent Remuneration Panel be called to recommend possible changes to the Member's Allowance Scheme to fund the proposals for DBS checks for elected members.

42/22 **Member Development Update**

The draft Member Development Programme, shaped by both the Local Government Association and Grant Thornton's Review was presented to the Committee.

The Committee expressed a desire to ensure training was accessible to elected members, both in terms of tailoring training packages and linking up with the events of each municipal year.

The Member Development update was considered by the Committee.

Resolved that the Draft Member Development Programme update be considered.

43/22 **Committee on Standards in Public Life Annual Report for 2021- 2022**

In July 2022, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (“CSPL”) published its Annual report for 2021- 2022.

The Committee noted the contents of the report for information, particularly that of relevance to Local Government.

44/22 **Gifts and Hospitality Register**

No new entries had been made to the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

45/22 **National Cases**

The Committee received and discussed details of national cases, as part of its learning and development.

46/22 **Complaints Update**

The Committee received an update in relation to complaints received under the Member Code of Conduct arrangements.

47/22 **Work Programme**

The Committee considered the work programme for 2022/23.

The Committee approved changes to the Work Programme, including rescheduling the meeting due to take place on 6 December 2022 to January 2023.

Resolved that the changes to the Work Programme be approved.

Meeting ended at 3.52pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk