

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 6 JULY 2017**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Claire Stewart, Katherine Chibah, Elaine Hayward and Anne-Marie Pearce

ABSENT Glynis Vince

OFFICERS: Jayne Middleton-Albooye (Acting Assistant Director Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer) Penelope Williams (Secretary)

Also Attending: No members of the public

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WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Glynis Vince and Sarah Jewell (Independent Person).

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SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Anne Marie Pearce stood in as substitute for Councillor Glynis Vince.

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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

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WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Committee received a draft copy of their work programme for 2017/18.

Members noted that they would be able to add items to the programme later in the year if they wished.

AGREED the work programme for 2017/18.

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UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS

The Committee received a copy of the Complaints rolling record for 2017/18.

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Jayne Middleton Albooye (Acting Assistant Director - Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer) presented the information to members, highlighting the following:

- Complaint 00A – Following the appeal heard by the Committee on 22 May 2017, the complainant referred the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman considered the complaint and decided not to investigate. There is no further appeal.
- Complaints 001 and 002 have been concluded, the outcome communicated to the complainants and we are waiting for their responses. These will be reported back to the next meeting.
- Complaint 003 was received on the 4 May 2017. Councillor Savva, the subject of the complaint, apologised and the complaint was withdrawn.
- Complaint 005 was currently being investigated by Jayne Middleton Albooye, herself.
- Complaint 006 was still under investigation, as additional people had had to be interviewed. It would be concluded shortly.

AGREED

1. To note the updates.
2. That up to date social media training, for all members as recommended by the Committee following consideration of complaint 00A, should be included in the current Member Training schedule.

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REPORT BACK ON INDEPENDENT PERSON TRAINING

Christine Chamberlain (Independent Person) reported back on training she had received in March 2017 organised by Hoey Ainsclough, specialists in councillor conduct issues:

Christine Chamberlain highlighted the following:

- Hoey Ainsclough had carried out a survey to assess the numbers of complaints being considered across the country. In terms of numbers Enfield seemed to have fewer complaints than other authorities. Many complaints overall came from parish councils: a layer of government which doesn't exist in Enfield.
- Other councils have used formal mediation to resolve complaints, rather than carrying out investigations which can be costly, and not very effective as there are very few sanctions which can be employed. It was suggested that we look into this option for Enfield.
- Some councillors, in other authorities, had been reported to the police and prosecuted for failure to declare disclosable pecuniary interests, which is a criminal offence.

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- At the training there had been some debate about whether hearings should be held in public or private. Different authorities did things differently. There were benefits and disadvantages to both approaches. It was generally agreed that it was more open and transparent to hold hearings in public, although it was also useful to have the opportunity to hold some discussions on the case in private, reporting the final outcome in public.
- Jayne Middleton-Albooye advised that there were very few instances when members had a disclosable pecuniary interest which could result in criminal proceedings.

AGREED to note the feedback from Christine Chamberlain and that the option of using an official, accredited mediator should be explored further.

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ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

The Committee received the draft copy of the Councillor Conduct Committee Annual Report for 2016/17.

AGREED that the report should be approved and that it would be referred to Council for consideration on Wednesday 19 July 2017.

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DISPENSATIONS 2016/17

The Committee received and noted the report on dispensations granted during the 2016/17 Municipal year.

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MINUTES

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2017 were received and agreed as a correct record.

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2017 were received and agreed as a correct record.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates agreed for future meetings as follows:

- Thursday 5 October 2017
- Thursday 7 December 2017

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- Tuesday 6 March 2018.