JOINT STANDARDS COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

Date: 17 July 2019
Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston
Time: 7.30pm
Present: East Northamptonshire Councillors:
Rosalie Beattie Gill Mercer
Andy Mercer Robin Underwood

Town and Parish Councillors:
Dave Munday (Stanwick Parish Council)
Nigel Rudd (Warmington Parish Council)
Roy Sparkes (Oundle Town Council)
Robert Tyman (Raunds Town Council)
Arthur Whittaker (Yarwell Parish Council)
Adrian Winkle (Irlhlingborough Town Council)
Vivienne Barnard (Independent Person)

87. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 MUNICIPAL YEAR

It was moved, seconded and agreed that Councillor Dave Munday be elected chairman of the Joint Standards Complaints Committee for 2019/20.

Councillor Dave Munday – in the Chair

88. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 MUNICIPAL YEAR

It was moved, seconded and agreed that Councillor Gill Mercer be elected vice-chairman of the Joint Standards Complaints Committee for 2019/20.

89. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Annabel de Capell Brooke, Lance Jones, Nigel Rudd (Warmington Parish Council) and Andrew Sortwell (Reserve Independent Member).

90. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Complaints Committee held on 30 March 2019 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.
91. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman invited those who wished to do so to declare interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

92. **QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10.3**

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

93. **REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

No requests for dispensations had been made.

94. **ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report which provided a brief update on Monitoring Officer activity covering the period from the last meeting of the Committee in March 2019 to date.

It was reported that there were five new potential complaints, two of which had so far resulted in formal complaints. A further nine formal complaints had also been made, split between ENC and Town and Parish Councillors. There was also a separate report on the agenda relating to complaints in respect of Easton on the Hill Parish Council.

Given the forthcoming changes in staffing, including the retirement of the current Monitoring Officer, it was proposed that future efforts were focussed on working with NCALC to meet the needs of new councillors elected in the May 2020 elections.

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report in terms of monitoring of complaint activity be noted;

*(Reason: to demonstrate active monitoring of the local ethical standards position.)*

95. **UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE AT EASTON ON THE HILL PARISH COUNCIL**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report updating the Committee on progress of the Action Plan arising from the Review of Governance at Easton on the Hill Parish Council, which was commissioned following a number of Councillor Code of Conduct complaints in 2017/18.

The Committee noted that it was important that the Parish Council remained aware of its continued interest and awareness of the review, and the importance of maintaining progress in meeting its recommendations as part of a revised timetable for progress.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Monitoring Officer be requested to write to Easton on the Hill Parish Council:
(a) Recognising that it will not be possible for it to produce the additional 9 month update, as previously requested, and the circumstances prevailing at Easton on the Hill and exceptionally defers the requested governance review response.

(b) Requesting a report from Easton on the Hill after 12 months (to be received by the end of September) followed by a further updated an final report after 15 months (by the end of December 19).

(c) Requesting the 12 month report should include the additional information around who is responsible for taking the proposed actions and when, together with details of the outcomes / changes achieved by the work to date previously requested.

(d) Conveying the expectation that all recommendations will be implemented by the 15 month report in order to show value for money in the investment of tax-payers money in carrying out the governance review.

[Reason: To provide further reassurance on the Parish Council’s progress in implementing the recommendations of the Governance Review carried out at this council.]

96. **SHARN MATTHEWS – MONITORING OFFICER**

The Chairman and all members of the Committee extended their warmest regards to Sharn Matthews, Monitoring Officer who would shortly be retiring from the Council. Sharn was thanked for her 10 years of service and presented with a card and flowers as a small token of gratitude.

Chairman