

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE****10:00 – 10:45****10 October 2017**

Present: Councillors Vaughan Thomas (chair following election), Bogelein (vice chair following election) Davis and Maxwell (substitute for Driver), Mr P Franzen (co-opted member) and Mr C Thrower (co-opted member), Rachel Crosbie, monitoring officer

Apologies Councillors Driver, Grahame, and Sands (M)

**1. Appointment of chair**

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Vaughan Thomas as chair for the ensuing civic year.

**2. Appointment of vice chair**

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Bogelein as the vice chair for the ensuing civic year.

**3. Declaration of interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Minutes**

Subject to noting that the first line of paragraph three, item 4 should read "Peter Franzen said that public bodies had to take whistleblowing seriously and it was now statute in the NHS" it was:-

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2016.

**5. Monitoring officer update (verbal)**

The monitoring officer updated the committee on the work undertaken since the last meeting of the standards committee in November 2016. She said that it was a positive point that the committee had not had to meet on a more regular basis as this showed that there had been no serious conduct issues.

She had however dealt with some complaints about members with a common theme being treating each other with respect.

She briefly outlined her responsibilities as the monitoring officer and said that her role was very much a two way process with a necessity for members and officers to raise any concerns with her in the first instance.

Eight complaints had been received by the monitoring officer since November 2016. In each case, she had spoken to the councillor and officers involved and closed the matters without the need for a standards committee hearing. When she had cause to meet with a member, their group leader had also been informed of the meeting.

Peter Franzen commented that there were clearly similar themes with regards to the complaints and asked whether a training session could be arranged for members with anonymous examples of acceptable and not acceptable behaviour in each situation. The monitoring officer said that she undertook training with members at the start of each civic year but would be prepared to facilitate an additional session before May 2018.

The monitoring officer said that on the whole, she had found that there was a willingness to apologise to the complainant early in the process which was the best way to resolve such complaints. In response to a question from Peter Franzen, she said that it was the role of the monitoring officer to make a decision on the next course of action following a complaint being received but she would also speak to Linda Barber, the Independent Person, as well as colleagues at nplaw.

A member asked if a councillor would always be informed if a complaint had been made against them. The monitoring officer said that as a matter of policy, she would make the member aware that a complaint had been received but may make the decision that the complaint should not be taken any further. A specific form would need to be completed which if submitted to the monitoring officer would be treated as a complaint.

In response to a question from a member, the monitoring officer said that in terms of governance issues, it was best for the member to speak to the relevant director if they had concerns but also to raise this with the monitoring officer so that she was aware of any potential issues.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) Note the update from the monitoring officer
- (2) Ask the monitoring officer to facilitate an additional training session for members on conduct issues including
  - the role of the monitoring officer
  - the process for complaints
  - register of interests, particularly regarding planning applications and licensing committees
  - any other governance issues

CHAIR