

# **Nottingham City Council**

## **Standards Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom on 27 July 2020 from 2.10 pm - 2.50 pm**

### **Membership**

#### **Present**

Councillor Neghat Khan (Chair)  
Councillor Graham Chapman  
Councillor Audrey Dinnall  
Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis  
Councillor Ethan Radford  
Councillor Wendy Smith  
Councillor Roger Steel  
Councillor Sam Webster  
Nigel Cullen – Independent Person

#### **Absent**

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Nancy Barnard - Governance and Electoral Services Manager  
Beth Brown - Head of Legal and Governance

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Malcolm Townroe – On Leave

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

None

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **4 Local Government Association Model Member Code of Conduct**

Beth Brown, Head of Legal and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report which invited the Committee to consider a draft response to the Local Government Association's consultation on a new model Code of Conduct. During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Key changes to the Code include:
  - The application of the Code to all forms of communication explicitly including social media,
  - Replacing the word respect with the word civility,
  - Including a definition of bullying and harassment,

- Extending the obligation to declare interests to include the financial interests or wellbeing of a friend, relative or close associate in addition to the councillor's own interests and those of their spouse or partner,
  - Introducing a rebuttable presumption that Councillors are acting in their capacity as a councillor at all times,
  - Imposing a bar on attending committee meetings for up to two months.
- The introduction of additional sanctions would require revisions to legislation.
- The Committee agreed the following amendments to the draft response:
  - The inclusion of the Committee's support for the presumption that Councillors should abide by the Code at all times,
  - A preference for "Councillors should" rather than "I will" in the model Code,
  - To support the inclusion of the £25 threshold for the value of gifts or hospitality that must be declared,
  - The inclusion of guidance on discrimination, and
  - The inclusion of a more rigorous definition of 'other interests' including preferment.

## **Resolved to**

**(1) Approve the draft response to the consultation subject to amendments based on the comments outlined above, and**

**(2) Delegate authority to the Chair of the Committee to approve the final draft for submission to the Local Government Association.**

## **5 Councillor Complaints - Update**

Nancy Barnard, Governance and Electoral Services Manager, introduced the report, covering the following issues:

- The majority of complaints received since the last meeting of the committee have been allegations that councillors have failed to respond to contact from citizens.
- All complaints have been investigated and all but one have been resolved informally.
- One complaint remains outstanding as further information is awaited from the complainant.

**Resolved to note the contents of the report.**

## **6 Date of next meeting**

**Resolved to meet at 10:30am on Friday 22 January 2021.**