

EXECUTIVE

Minute Extract

Minute Extract of a meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday 18th February 2019 at 1000 hours.

0670. ITEMS RECOMMENDED BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES REVIEW OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE BY CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor R. Bowler, Chair of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee, presented the report of the Scrutiny Committee on the Review of Standards Committee completed during 2018/19.

During the 2017/18 municipal year, the Standards Committee responded to the national consultation by the Committee on Standards in Public Life on their 'Review of Local Government Ethical Standards'. As a result of their own review, the Standards Committee felt it was pertinent to also have an external opinion on how they operated and requested that scrutiny complete a review.

A range of concerns were raised by Standards Committee and these were considered as part of the scoping process. The review was completed outside of the usual meeting programme via a small Working Group, with regular reports back to Committee.

The key issues arising from the review were:

- The introduction of a more formalised approach to training, particularly at Parish level;
- Consideration of Article 9 of the Constitution and the Committee Terms of Reference (Part 3.6) as part of the annual review process; and
- Improved public information, both web-based and hard-copy, to ensure the role of Standards Committee is clear.

The Scrutiny Review put forward seven recommendations which were intended to assist the Council in improving existing approaches to Member training and engagement on Standards.

The report outlined the recommendations and the responses received by officers, which included some amendments. The Scrutiny Committee supported the amendments and therefore presented the following recommendations to Executive for consideration:

- 1.1 That training in relation to Code of Conduct and DPIs is programme as part of the District Member Induction Programme, with a refresher course two years later, to accommodate any changes in legislation/Council membership.

- 1.2 That training in relation to Code of Conduct and DPs is programme on a minimum annual basis to Parish Council Liaison, to accommodate in-year changes to legislation/Council membership.
- 1.3 That the website is reviewed to ensure information in relation to the Standards Committee is both more accessible and user-friendly, including:
 - Publication of the Standards Annual Report as a document in its own right (rather than embedded in Committee papers);
 - A review of Customer Information Booklet 8, with improved publicity of its availability given that it is not a hard-copy publication.(This recommendation had a revised target date of October 2019)
- 1.4 That Standards Committee considers the analysis of our current membership and benchmark data, as part of any review of Article 9 of the Constitution.
- 1.5 That the appointment of the Co-opted Independent Chair is maintained, as a demonstration of our commitment to the Seven Principles of Public Life.
- 1.6 That the information gathered as part of the review benchmark exercise is taken in to consideration when reviewing the Committee Terms of Reference, within Part 3.6 of the Constitution.
- 1.7 That the Standards Committee produces an Induction Pack for all new Councillors to be utilised by the Monitoring Officer/Parish Clerk when working with newly appointed District and Parish Councillors.
(This recommendation had a revised target date of September 2019)

Executive welcomed the report and the constructive recommendations and thanked Scrutiny for their work undertaken during the review.

Moved by Councillor M.J. Dooley and seconded by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr
RESOLVED that:

- (1) Executive approve the recommendations of the review outlined in section 2 of the report as amended above.
- (2) the recommendations be monitored by the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee over the next 12 months.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To further improve the advice and training given to Councillors at the District and Parish level in relation to compliance with accepted standards.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

There were no alternative options considered and rejected by Executive.

(Scrutiny and Elections Officer)