

- Present:** Councillor Adrianna McNulty (*in the Chair*)
- Councillors:** Liz Bushell, Geoff Ellis, Ric Metcalfe, Christopher Reid, Thomas Dyer and Loraine Woolley
- Independent Person(s):** Roger Vine

45. Confirmation of Minutes - 13 January 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2020 be confirmed.

46. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

47. Local Government Association Model Code of Member Conduct

Graham Watts, Democratic and Elections Manager:

- (a) Presented a report which provided the Ethics and Engagement Committee with an opportunity to consider the approved version of the Local Government Association Model Code of Member Conduct.
- (b) Reported that the Local Government Association undertook a review of the Model Code of Conduct following a report by the Committee for Standards in Public Life in 2019 which had been previously considered by the Ethics and Engagement Committee.
- (c) Explained that consultation on the new Model Code of Member Conduct had been open for ten weeks from 8 June 2020 to 17 August 2020 and that all members of the City Council had been given an opportunity to provide a response.
- (d) Reported that the City of Lincoln Council's Code of Member Conduct had recently been updated to add more clarity and better represent harrassment and bullying, aspects that had been added to the new Model Code.
- (e) Reported that guidance to support implementation of the new Model Code of Member Conduct had not yet been published, however, it was felt prudent to present the approved version to the Ethics and Engagement Committee at this stage.
- (f) Reported that initial feedback from a number of Monitoring Officers across the country was that the new Model Code of Member Conduct was not as detailed or prescriptive as the local Codes of Member Conduct they already had in place at their respective authorities.
- (g) Invited feedback from members in respect of the City Council's Code of Member Conduct and whether it required any amendments in light of the new Model Code of Member Conduct.

- (h) Invited suggestions from members as to how training on the Code of Member Conduct should be facilitated.
- (i) Invited questions and comments from members.

Councillor Thomas Dyer welcomed the review by the Local Government Association and the revised Model Code of Member Conduct. He felt that the Ethics and Engagement Committee should review the City Council's Code of Conduct on an annual basis.

Councillor Dyer reflected on reference within the Local Government Association's document to a social media policy and suggested that this should be incorporated into the City Council's Social Media Policy.

Appendix C to the Local Government Association's document made reference to best practice recommendations set out in the original report by the Committee for Standards in Public Life. Councillor Dyer suggested that work be undertaken to ensure the City Council met the standards associated with each of the best practice recommendations, and that the outcome of that piece of work be reported back to the Ethics and Engagement Committee.

In relation to remote meetings and associated conduct, Councillor Dyer asked whether procedures and protocols could be reviewed to ensure that the same standards expected at physical meetings were in place when meeting in public on a remote platform.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe agreed with Councillor Dyer's sentiments. In respect of training, he was content with annual training led by the Council's Monitoring Officer as opposed to any e-learning which may be available.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the new Local Government Association Code of Member Conduct be noted.
- (2) That no amendments to the City of Lincoln Council's Code of Member Conduct be recommended at this stage but that the Code be reviewed annually by the Ethics and Engagement Committee.
- (3) That officers be requested to undertake a review of the City Council's Code of Conduct and associated procedures against the best practice recommendations set out in Appendix C of the Local Government Association Model Code of Member Conduct.
- (4) That procedures and protocols relating to remote public meetings be reviewed to reflect the same standards as physical public meetings.
- (5) That training on the Member Code of Conduct continues to be facilitated by the Council's Monitoring Officer on an annual basis.