



## **Minutes of the Procedures Review Committee Meeting**

**held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 2pm in the Parish Office**

Present: Cllr G Gregory (in the chair), Cllr A Mills, , Cllr P Alker, Cllr M Holmes, Cllr K Ingram and Jayne Cooper, Clerk/RFO

Public Open Forum - none present

### **1 To receive apologies and record absences**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Symons, Cllr Booth, Cllr Powell and Cllr Payne.

### **2 To record any declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022**

The minutes and the notes of the meetings were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### **4 To consider any matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

There were no matters arising.

### **5 To complete the annual review of Standing Orders (begun at the November meeting) with particular reference to amendments made as a result of Legal Topic Note 5E.**

#### **Sections 2C (definition of DPI);**

It was agreed to enhance this section by defining the meaning of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. The approved amendments to point 2C are detailed below in italics:

#### **2C Code of Conduct**

- a. All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b. Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. The councillor or non-councillor may return to the meeting, after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

- c. Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have any another interest, if so required by the Council's code of conduct.

The councillor or non-councillor may return to the meeting, after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest. *See also 3.3 j and 3.4 l v below.*

*Such an interest (a non-disclosable pecuniary interest NDPI) is defined as:*

*A matter which is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest but which affects the councillor's financial interest or well-being:*

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;*
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect the councillor's view of the wider public interest*

*A councillor so affected may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. (3.4 l v below) Otherwise s/he must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation.*

*If it is a 'sensitive interest', (ie one which if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation) the councillor does not have to disclose the nature of the interest.*

### **3.3 J Public Open Forum at Committee meetings and 3.4 I Public Open Forum at Ordinary Meetings**

The same amendment was agreed for Standing Order 3.3 (J) and 3.4 (I) regarding the time allocated for public open forum and that the Chair would advise public on conciseness when speaking. Points 3.3 (J) and 3.4 (I) to read as follows (changes in italics):

There will be a period of public participation prior to every Council Meeting (Public Open Forum), of *10 minutes in total*, for the purpose of making representations, giving evidence or answering questions. These will be dealt with individually and no more than 3 questions may be asked by any one person within the allotted time of 10 minutes, which may be extended at the discretion of the Chair in exceptional circumstances. If several members of the public wish to speak, *the Chair will remind them of the time allotted in total and advise brevity.*

NB in virtual meetings, where these are permitted by law, the period of Public Open Forum is 5 minutes only.

**6 To carry out a review of the GPC Code of Conduct, adopted May 2021, and decide how frequently it should be reviewed in future.**

The Clerk had reviewed the Council's Code of Conduct (CoC) alongside NALC's Model Code of Conduct and apart from minor changes (order of content) it was confirmed that the council's CoC is in line with NALC's. The Clerk confirmed that all Councillors receive a copy of the Code following election (every 4 years) or following co-option. It was agreed that the CoC should be reviewed every 4 years unless the Council is informed of a required change by SPCA, NALC or other appropriate body.

**7 To share comments arising from members reviewing the council's website, as per last minutes, and to review the Quality Statements.**

It was noted that many sections of the website had recently been reviewed and significantly updated with relevant information. Council committees, where relevant, would be responsible for overseeing the appropriate sections of the website to ensure information is up to date and informative.

Statements required for Quality status had been updated. The following statements were approved and would be posted on the Council's website:

- Value For Money
- Biodiversity
- Crime & Disorder

Performance as a Corporate Body required two minor amendments:

- i. Changes to Planning Committee to meeting monthly rather than every 3 weeks.
- ii. A statement to be included about self-assessment under Staff and mention of focus events to be added to Policies and procedures

Subject to the minor changes being implemented, the statement to be posted on the website.

Leadership and Planning statement required reference to the Council's Business Plan. Subject to this addition the statement to be posted on the website.

**8 To consider any new policies:**

Freedom of Information Created May 22 - The draft Freedom of Information Policy was approved and would be posted on the Council's website.

**9 To consider making recommendations to Council as to how the Business Plan should be monitored and to share any sample Business Plans reviewed by members.**

Several samples of Business Plans obtained from other parish council websites were reviewed. Cllr Mills agreed to prepare a draft Business Plan, using the preferred layouts and preferred level of content from those reviewed. A subgroup would be formed to consider GPC's draft Business Plan.

**10 To discuss the GPC Equal Opportunities Policy along with a NALC sample Equality and Diversity Policy in order to decide the way forward.**

It was agreed that both policies could be amalgamated into one. Cllr Alker to review and produce a draft policy for further consideration.

**11 To consider the need for a Home Working Policy and look at a sample policy.**

It was agreed that a Home Working Policy was not required. The Clerk and CSO work at home on an ad hoc basis which was acceptable. Sample policies reviewed were for home working on a more permanent basis and therefore not relevant.

**12 To agree the date and time of the next meeting**

22<sup>nd</sup> June at 2pm.