

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Standards Committee was held on 3 July 2018.

PRESENT: Councillors Rostron, (Chair), Davison, Goodchild, Harvey, Lewis (As Substitute for Brunton Dobson), Rathmell (As Substitute for Hubbard), Storey, Thompson and J Young

OFFICERS: L Henman, A Hoy, D Johnson, S Lightwing, S Reynolds, B Roberts

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Brunton Dobson and Hubbard.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest at this point in the meeting.

18/1 MINUTES - STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 4 NOVEMBER 2015

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 4 November 2015 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

18/2 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECKS FOR COUNCILLORS

A report of the Strategic Director Finance, Governance and Support was presented to consider changes to the Council's Policy on Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Checks for Elected Members, now known as Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS).

The Council's current CRB Policy for Elected Members was introduced in June 2010. Since that Policy was approved there had been some important developments that affect the criminal records checking process and the Policy needed to be updated. Previously, the Council's policy was to undertake an enhanced criminal records check for all Councillors every five years, and many of those checks had now expired.

There were two levels of DBS checks that could be carried out:

1. Standard/Basic DBS checks which disclosed previous cautions, convictions, police reprimands and warnings related to an individual.
2. Enhanced checks. Chief Police Officers were asked to provide any information which they reasonably believed to be relevant and ought to be included in the enhanced DBS certificate, having regard to the purpose for which the certificate was sought.

In light of the changes to the law and the redefined scope of regulated activity, it was proposed that the Council carried out enhanced checks for posts involving a greater degree of member involvement in education and social care functions and which had a much greater degree of contact with services that engaged in regulated activities of the Council including:

- The Mayor, Executive Members for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Children's Services and Education and Skills.
- Scrutiny Chairs: Children and Young People's Learning, Children and Young People's Social Care and Services, Adult Social Care and Services and Health.
- Corporate Parenting Board Members/Looked After Children/Adoption and Fostering.

For all other Members it was recommended that a standard/basic DBS would be undertaken.

Two tier checks would allow the Council to have a proportionate approach and help mitigate any risk and also allow the public some confidence that appropriate checks were carried out.

DBS checks were generally undertaken for the purpose of whether or not a person was suitable for a specific employment and related more to staff than Elected Members.

It was noted that if an adverse DBS check was received in respect of an Elected Member, the Monitoring Officer could take this up with the Member's Group Leader and suggest that he or she was removed from any Committee where there could potentially be an influence in relation to any conviction highlighted by the check. A Member suggested that the Policy on DBS checks should set out the process to be followed.

It was proposed that the frequency of checks would remain at every 5 years: 4-year term of office plus 1. Each standard/basic check cost £26, and an enhanced check cost £44. It was proposed that the costs would be met from the Members' Allowances Budget.

ORDERED as follows that:

1. Enhanced DBS checks would be carried out in relation to specific roles, which had a relationship with services that engaged in regulated activity and that a standard/basic DBS check was carried out for all other Elected Members.
2. The Council's current DBS policy for Elected Members was updated to reflect the above amendment.
3. The Monitoring Officer would prepare a further revision of the DBS Policy for consideration by the Constitution and Members' Development Committee, to include a process for dealing with adverse DBS checks.

18/3

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented a report to provide details of the Registers of Gifts and Hospitality for Members and Officers.

The Members' Code of Conduct required Councillors and Co-opted Members to register their financial and other interests. The Monitoring Officer was required to establish and maintain a register of those interests.

Responsibility for ensuring interests were declared and for submitting updates to their entries rested with the Member.

The Monitoring was required to review the Registers of Gifts and Hospitality for Members and Officers on a regular basis and report details of the entries to the Standards Committee. The Registers were available for inspection by the public during normal office opening hours.

Declarations entered into the Registers of Gifts and Hospitality for Members and Officers for the period November 2015 to December 2017 were attached at Appendices A and B to the submitted report.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted that he had decided that Officers no longer needed to declare Christmas gifts such as biscuits and chocolates from Elected Members, which were shared in the office.

ORDERED that the content of the report was received and noted.