

## ETHICS COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Wednesday 23 November 2016 at 6:36pm in Room F5, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon, CR0 1NX

### MINUTES – PART A

- Present:** Councillor Oliver Lewis (Chair)  
Councillor Joy Prince (Vice Chair)  
Councillors: Pat Clouder, Mario Creatura, Mike Selva and Donald Speakman
- Mr. Ashok Kumar, Independent Person (non -voting) and Mrs. Anne Smith, Independent Person (non-voting).
- Also in Attendance:** Jacqueline Harris-Baker, Acting Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer.
- A19/16                    Apologies for Absence**
- None
- A20/16                    Minutes of the last meeting**
- The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Part A minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8 February 2016 be signed as a correct record.
- A21/16                    Disclosure of Interest**
- There were no disclosures of a pecuniary interest at this meeting, not already registered.
- A22/16                    Urgent Business (if any)**
- It was noted that there were no items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.
- A23/16                    Exempt Items**
- There were no exempt items of business to consider at this meeting.
- A24/16                    GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (agenda item 6)**
- The Acting Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer presented the report and confirmed that under the Code of Conduct for gifts

and hospitality, accumulative gifts and hospitality received in excess of £50 are required to be declared. The Committee were concerned that the qualifying limit had been set too low, as this didn't take into account those elected Members that are routinely engaging with external officers, working outside the borough and partners that may wish to make presentations in the form of a gift or hospitality. The Committee agreed to recommend amendment of the Code in the form of additional requirements, as worded in paragraph 3.5 of the Report, to reflect that circumstances whereby a Member may be in receipt of multiple gifts.

The Committee asked how the existing Register is managed and how disclosures are kept up-to-date. It was confirmed that the Register and gifts and hospitality declarations are available online. In addition, any guidance should highlight to new and existing Councillors that the annual declaration will also include an up-to-date list of gifts and hospitality.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to full Council that changes be made to how gifts and hospitality are to be declared on the Members' Register under the Code of Conduct as set out in the Report and that;

A reminder be given by the Monitoring Officer to all Members of their obligations regarding the declaration of gifts and hospitality in accordance with the Code of Conduct and the process for doing so.

## **A25/16**

### **ANNUAL UPDATE ON ETHICS COMPLAINTS RECEIVED** (agenda item 7)

The Chair reported that some Croydon specific complaints had been receive but the reasons for complaint had been relatively low level. The Monitoring Officer gave further detail reporting that 5 complaints had been received.

In respect of 2 complaints, no further information was provided, on request, to enable consideration of the matter. The 3 that had been assessed against the initial assessment criteria, did not proceed to investigation. In each instance the overall summary was that they were not sufficiently serious to warrant further investigation.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and to receive a similar update next year.

**A26/16**

**WORK PROGRAMME OF THE COMMITTEE** (agenda item 8)

The Chair reported that one further meeting had been diarised for the current municipal year and directed Members to the previously distributed work programme.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

**DISPENSATION APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERS** (agenda item 9)

**A27/16**

The Committee were informed that no dispensation applications had been received.

Members requested that if any dispensations are granted by the Monitoring Officer between meetings, could the outcome be reported to the Ethics committee.

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**Part B –**

**None**

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The meeting ended at 6:46pm