

**Bristol City Council
Minutes of the Values and Ethics Sub-Committee**

11 March 2024 at 2.30pm



Members Present:-

Adebola Adebayo (Chair) Andrew Brown, David Wilcox and Jonathan Hucker.

Officers in Attendance:-

Nancy Rollason – Head of Legal Services (HoLS), Allison Taylor – Democratic Services

1. Welcome & Introductions.

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting. The Committee noted the emergency evacuation procedure arrangements.

2. Apologies for absence.

It was noted that Councillor Steve Pearce was not present.

Apologies were received from Tim O’Gara, the Monitoring Officer (MO).

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Wilcox declared that he was a landowner in respect of item 7. Councillor Brown declared that he was a renter in respect of item 7.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

Resolved – That the minutes of the 3 November 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

5. Public Forum.

The Sub-Committee noted the Public Forum Statements and responses to questions by those members of the public in attendance.

The following supplementary questions would receive written responses from the MO.

Suzanne Audrey asked the following:-



1. Was it just a mistake that legal services didn't realise that an independent person had to be ratified by FC?
2. I've shown clear evidence that 2 Deputy Mayors have not completed the register of interests properly. What's the process for rectifying that – will it just be ignored or will they be asked to complete it?

The Chair asked the members of the Sub-Committee if they wished to comment in respect of question 2 above and the following comments were made:-

1. Every member should have an up-to-date register of interests. If incomplete they should be done as soon as possible and the reasons why they weren't up to date should be provided to Full Council;
2. There was an expectation that when in receipt of hospitality this would be declared in the register. There should be recourse to rectify that;
3. There should be a clear process to follow if a register was not completed properly;
4. The HoLS confirmed there was a formal process to follow in respect of making a complaint under the Members Code of Conduct.

Mike Oldreive asked the following:-

1. The HOLS was directly involved in appointing an independent person unlawfully. Why did she go ahead – did she not understand the law or legislation?
2. Are the independent members subject to the members complaints procedure?

Post Meeting Clarification Note.

Mike Oldreive - Supplementary Question 1 – This was withdrawn under Committee Procedure Rule CMR9.5 – under the category of offensive.

6. Revised Complaints Procedure.

The HoLS summarized the contents of the report for the benefit of the Sub-Committee and the following points arose from discussion:-

1. Para. 6.3 listed reasons why a complaint could not be dealt with. Item D needed further clarification in respect of political views being homophobic or racist;
2. Para. 4.3 although amended still suggested a presumption to confidentiality. Clarification was needed for a member of the public who chose to go public and what the implications of this were. It was agreed to review para. 4.3 & 4.4 to provide greater clarity;
3. A para 4.5 was needed in respect of a Councillor publicizing a complaint if they were the complainee;
4. Timescales for processing a complaint should be accelerated during the Pre-Election Period (PEP) so that Councillors did not have a complaint 'hanging over them'. The HoLS responded that the scenario was rare and it would not be able to shorten the process by much.

There being no further comments the Chair agreed that it was in the public interest to bring the report back to a further V&E Sub-Committee with amendments in respect of the comments above. As the PEP was approaching it was agreed to clarify with the MO that the subject matter was 'business as usual' so



that it could be resolved this municipal year. If it should prove necessary to consider in the new municipal year it was agreed that the existing Sub-Committee would be consulted before the Sub-Committee met again.

Resolved – that a further report be brought to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

7. Dispensations.

Both Councillors Brown & Wilcox confirmed that they were able to make a decision given their earlier declarations;

The HoLS summarized the contents of the report for the benefit of the Sub-Committee and the following points arose from discussion:-

1. It was confirmed that every Councillor would require a dispensation if they lived in Bristol and fell in the categories of landowner, renter or landlord;
2. When declaring at Full Council the Councillor should expressly state the category of dispensation so that there was full transparency;
3. It was not clear why a landowner had a pecuniary interest;
4. There being no further comments it was:-

Resolved - That a dispensation to all Members of the Council who have a disclosable pecuniary interest in land as an owner, landlord or tenant of public or privately owned property, when the report of the Living Rent Commission is considered by Full Council on 12 March 2024, be granted.

Post meeting Note dated 12 March 2024.

A drafting error in the report to the Sub-Committee had included owners. The DPI only applied to tenants and landlords.

The meeting ended at 3.15pm.

CHAIR _____



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