

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **1. Name**

- 1.1 The name of this committee is the Aston Pride NDC Standards Committee (the “Standards Committee”).

### **2. Status**

- 2.1 The Standards Committee is a formal committee formed by, and reporting to, the Aston Pride NDC Partnership Board (the “Partnership Board”).
- 2.2 The Standards Committee will only meet at the request of the Chair of the Partnership Board following a breach of the Code of Conduct (as set out in Section 3 of the Governance Directory), a written complaint against any member of the Partnership Board, or to consider the inappropriate behaviour of a board member at Partnership meetings. In the case of a complaint made in writing about the Chair of the Partnership Board the Executive Director shall have the power to set up a Standards Committee.
- 2.3 The Standards Committee will have the following powers:
  - 2.3.1 To exonerate the member or members of the charges made against them;
  - 2.3.2 To issue whatever sanction is felt to be required, such as a written warning against similar behaviour in future, or a requirement to make reparation against a third party, or such other sanction felt to be appropriate by the members of the Standards Committee;
  - 2.3.3 To apply a temporary suspension on the member or members from attendance at Partnership Board and Theme Group meetings, or from any and all active involvement as a member or members of the Partnership Board, for a specified period;
  - 2.3.4 To dismiss the member or members from the Partnership Board with immediate effect.

- 2.4 The Standards Committee will disband immediately the inquiry is concluded, and the Committee has ensured that all documentation and correspondence has been completed.

### **3. Composition**

- 3.1 The Standards Committee will not have a regular membership and will convene as and when required.
- 3.2 The Partnership Chair will appoint a member of the Partnership Board to chair the Standards Committee (the “Standards Committee Chair”).
- 3.3 The Standards Committee Chair, in consultation with the Partnership Board Chair, and the Executive Director, as and when appropriate, will select the other members of the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee will consist of at least three and not more than five members of the Partnership Board (including the Standards Committee Chair).
- 3.4 In the case of a complaint made in writing about the Chair of the Partnership Board, the Standards Committee will consist of a representative from Government Office of the West Midlands, the Accountable Body and a Community Member.
- 3.5 The Standards Committee will be required to take professional advice as appropriate, and may invite other persons as observers or advisors with, for example, legal or human resources qualifications, to the Committee. Such persons may be fully involved in the investigation at the discretion of the Standards Committee Chair, but may not vote.
- 3.6 No member of the Partnership Board will be allowed to take a place on the Standards Committee if they are subject to any part of the written complaint, or have a relationship with any member against which a complaint has been made which may be seen to affect the integrity of the investigation or of the outcome.
- 3.7 The Standards Committee Chair will, after consulting with the other members of the Standards Committee, decide whether a member who has declared an interest should remain on the Standards Committee, or whether he/she should be replaced in order for the matter to proceed.
- 3.8 Meetings of the Standards Committee will not be open to any other member of the Partnership Board, nor to other partner organisations

save by prior written agreement of the Standards Committee Chair, nor to any members of the general public.

#### **4. Chair**

- 4.1 The Chair will be a member of the Partnership Board, appointed by the Chair of the Partnership Board, for the period of the investigation.
- 4.2 The chair may be the Chair of the Partnership Board, or any other member of the Partnership Board, as may be deemed appropriate for the nature of the investigation.
- 4.3 The final duty of the Chair will be to report on the decision or decisions of the Standards Committee to the next available Partnership Board meeting.

#### **5. Decision Making**

- 5.1 Decisions shall be arrived at by consensus. Each member of the Standards Committee will have one vote and all matters requiring a formal decision will be decided by a show of hands by those members present and entitled to vote, with the exception of the Independent Chair of the Partnership Board, (if he is a member of the Standards Committee) who will not be entitled to vote.

#### **6. Declaration of Interests**

- 6.1 At every meeting of the Standards Committee members must disclose any relationship with any member or members who are the subject of the complaint being investigated, which may be seen to affect the integrity of the investigation or of the outcome of it.
- 6.2 The Standards Committee Chair will after consulting with the other members of the Standards Committee decide whether a member who has declared an interest should remain on the Standards Committee or whether he/she should be replaced in order for the matter to proceed

#### **7. Conduct**

- 7.1 Members of the Standards Committee agree to read and comply with the Code of Conduct as a condition of membership of the Standards Committee.

## **8. Role and Tasks**

8.1 The Standards Committee is to work on behalf of the Partnership Board with the following role and tasks:

- 8.1.1 To consider a written complaint or complaints against a member or members of the Partnership Board by interviewing all relevant persons within a formal investigative process;
- 8.1.2 To consider any case of repeated inappropriate behaviour of a Board Member at Board meetings;
- 8.1.3 To conduct an inquiry thoroughly and promptly, without external influence being brought to bear, and to hear evidence and make deliberations in a totally confidential environment;
- 8.1.4 To call whomever it is felt appropriate to offer useful evidence in respect of the matter under investigation.
- 8.1.5 To arrive at a decision or decisions on the appropriate response to the matter under investigation, and on the appropriate action or actions to be taken against the member or members subject to investigation;
- 8.1.6 To ensure that the investigation is minuted, and that the process of arriving at appropriate action or actions is robust and auditable;
- 8.1.7 To inform the member or members subject to investigation of the outcome of the investigation, in writing, within five days of concluding the investigation;
- 8.1.8 To inform Government Office for the West Midlands and the Accountable Body when a Standards Committee has been convened and to keep them fully informed of developments;
- 8.1.9 To make recommendations to the Partnership Board following the investigation which might address areas which could potentially lead to future complaints or to further breaches of the Code of Conduct.

## **9. Reporting Arrangements**

- 9.1 The Standards Committee will report its findings to the next meeting of the Partnership Board once the investigation has been concluded and appropriate action has been agreed. The Partnership Board will not have the power to overturn the decision of the Standards Committee.

## **10. Servicing and Arrangements for Meetings**

- 10.1 The Standards Committee will ensure that it has the appropriate secretarial support, and the involvement of the appropriate professional support to conduct an adequate and thorough investigation.

## **11. Appeals Panel**

- 11.1 Should the member or members subject to the Standards Committee investigation lodge a written appeal with the reasons for making that appeal within ten working days of receiving, in writing, the decision of the Standards Committee, the Chair of the Partnership Board will convene an Appeals Panel.
- 11.2 The Appeals Panel will consist of three members of the Partnership Board, who did not serve on the Standards Committee which considered the original investigation, one of whom will be appointed chair of the Appeals Panel by the Chair of the Partnership Board.
- 11.3 No member of the Partnership Board will be allowed to take a place on the Appeals Panel if they are subject to any part of the written complaint, or have a relationship with any member against which a complaint has been made, which may be seen to affect the integrity of the investigation or of the outcome.
- 11.4 The Appeals Panel Chair will, after consulting with the other members of the Appeals Panel, decide whether a member who has declared an interest should remain on the Appeals Panel, or whether he/she should be replaced in order for the matter to proceed.
- 11.5 Decisions shall be arrived at by consensus. Each member of the Appeals Panel will have one vote and all matters requiring a formal decision will be decided by a show of hands by those members present and entitled to vote, with the exception of the Independent Chair of the Partnership Board, (if he is a member of the Appeals Panel) who will not be entitled to vote.

- 11.6 The Appeals Panel will be required only to consider the content of the written appeal, and not to repeat the original investigation.
- 11.7 The Appeals Panel will have the power to invite to interview all persons necessary to review the decision of the Standards Committee, and to uphold or reject the appeal.
- 11.8 The Appeals Panel will receive secretarial and professional support in order to arrive at a robust and auditable decision.
- 11.9 The Chair of the Appeals Panel will inform the member or members of the final decision of the Panel, in writing, within five days of the conclusion of the investigation.
- 11.10 The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final, and there will be no further opportunity for appeal.
- 11.11 The Chair will inform Government Office for the West Midlands and the Accountable Body when an Appeals Panel has been convened and will keep them fully informed of developments as appropriate.
- 11.12 The Chair of the Appeals Panel will inform the Partnership Board, at the next meeting, of the decision or decisions of the Appeals Panel.
- 11.13 The Partnership Board will not be able to overturn the decision of the Appeals Panel.