

Time Commenced – 4.05pm
Time Finished – 4.55pm

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
26 November 2013

Present: Councillor Tittley (Chair)
Councillor Barker
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Pegg
Councillor Skelton
Alan Cameron (Independent Person)
Ian Green (Independent Person)
Peter Purnell (Co-opted Member)
Philip Sunderland (Co-opted Member)

01/13 Apologies

There were no apologies.

02/13 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

03/13 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

04/13 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25 April 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2013 were noted.

05/13 Appointment of Independent Person to the Standards Committee

The Committee received a report of the Monitoring Officer on Appointment of Independent Person to the Standards Committee.

It was reported that at the end of June 2013, Peter McCrea stood down as an Independent Person to the Standards Committee, as the transitional arrangements had come to an end. It was further reported that the vacancy was advertised on the Council's website in September 2013 and that interviews took place in October and early November. Members noted that the interview panel was made up of Councillors Tittley, Barker and Skelton. The panel agreed to appoint Ian Green as the Independent Person to the Standards Committee.

Resolved:

- 1. to note the appointment of Ian Green as Independent Person to the Standards Committee; and**
- 2. to welcome Ian Green as Independent Person to the Standards Committee.**

06/13 Planning Committee Protocols

The Committee received a report of the Monitoring Officer on Planning Committee Protocols.

It was reported that at its meeting on 25 July 2013, the Planning Control Committee approved minor revisions to the adopted Planning Protocol (attached at Appendix 2). Members noted that the Planning Protocol needed to be amended, at that time, to reflect changes that had taken place since its adoption in 2005, most significantly those brought about by the adoption of Members Code of Conduct and the Localism Act 2011.

Members agreed that the title of paragraph 17 of the protocol should be amended to read, 'Complaints Relating to Breaches in Probity and Protocol'.

Resolved:

- 1. to consider and comment upon the current Planning Protocol; and**
- 2. to recommend that the title of paragraph 17 of the protocol be amended to read, 'Complaints Relating to Breaches in Probity and Protocol'.**

07/13 Reporting of Complaints

The Committee received a report of the Monitoring Officer on Reporting of Complaints.

It was reported that at paragraphs 15 and 16 of the procedure for considering complaints that Members have breached the Code of Conduct it was stated that:

- Wherever there has been a decision that the subject member has breached the Code of Conduct that decision and the reasons for it shall be published in a prominent position on the Council's website; and
- Wherever there is a decision that the subject member has not breached the Code of Conduct that decision shall be put on the Council's website in a prominent position if the subject member wishes it to be.

It was further reported that since the introduction of the new Standards Regime in July 2012, the public reporting of complaints had taken place through the Annual Report of the Standards Committee and that the annual report was available online on the Council's committee management information system (CMIS).

Members noted that it was proposed that complaints be reported, as at paragraphs 15 and 16 of the procedure, through the setting up of a dedicated standards section on CMIS. It was also proposed that a link to the section be set up on the 'Complaints procedure – local councillors' page of the Council's website.

Resolved to approve the method of reporting complaints as outlined at paragraph 1.3 of the report.

08/13 Declaring Interests – Questions to Ask Yourself

The Committee received a report of the Monitoring Officer on Declaring Interests – Questions to Ask Yourself.

It was reported that the Standards Committee was keen to retain high standards of ethical governance and therefore offer as much guidance and support as it could to all Members on interests. Attached at Appendix 2 was a draft Declaring Interests – Questions to Ask Yourself form. It was proposed that the form be issued with the agenda for every meeting and that it would be inserted directly after the agenda front sheet. Members noted that the intention was to assist Members in deciding whether or not they had a declarable interest in an item on an agenda and to encourage thoughts on this matter before the meeting.

Members agreed that the following should be inserted at the end of the form:

- These matters are explained more fully in the Members Code of Conduct
- If in any doubt please speak to the Monitoring Officer

Members agreed that a report on Members and interests training be brought to the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

Resolved:

- 1. to approve the use of Declaring Interests – Questions to Ask Yourself form as outlined in paragraph 1.3;**
- 2. to agree the following additions to be inserted at the end of the form:**
 - **These matters are explained more fully in the Members Code of Conduct**
 - **If in any doubt please speak to the Monitoring Officer; and**
- 3. to request that a report on Members and interests training be brought to the next meeting of the Standards Committee.**

09/12 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved to exclude the press and public during consideration of minute 10/13 under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

10/13 Summary of Progress of Complaints

The Committee received a report of the Monitoring Officer on Summary of Progress with Member Complaints 2013/14.

Resolved to note the report.

MINUTES END