

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Thursday, 24 August, 2012 at 10.00 a.m. at Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors R.C. Evans (Chair), M.B. Hosken, A.D. McClements and R.J. Sloan.

ST-5 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 14 June 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ST-6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors S, Davies, T.J. Hope and A.J. Stanton

ST-7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M.B. Hosken enquired as to whether he should declare an interest as he knew the person who was the subject of the code of conduct investigation. The Monitoring Officer advised that this would not require a declaration in the circumstances described.

ST-8 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business 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 Local Government Act 1972.

ST-9 REVIEW OF AN ONGOING CODE OF CONDUCT INVESTIGATION

The report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection updated the Committee of recent developments on the ongoing code of conduct investigation and sought a decision on whether the matter should proceed to a final hearing. Previously, an investigation had been completed which found a breach of the Code of Conduct. Mr. Wood had now resigned his position as a Town councillor and the Committee were asked whether the matter should proceed to hearing or whether no further action should be taken.

From 1 July a new Standards framework was in place. It was possible to consider complaints made under the old Standards framework within the new system but the process and the sanctions were different.

The Monitoring Officer told the Committee that it had taken over a year to get to this stage of the proceedings.

The Monitoring Officer asked the Committee to consider three main considerations:

- Was there sufficient public interest to proceed with the matter against a former councillor?
- What powers the Committee and/or the Town Council had in relation to sanctions if a finding of a breach of the code was made?
- Was it an appropriate use of public funds in the current circumstances?

Members discussed the issues and concluded that no effective sanctions were available and that further action was not in the public interest.

RESOLVED – That the complaint against Mr. Steve Wood, former Oakengates Town Councillor should not proceed to a final hearing.

The meeting ended at 10.17 a.m.

Chairman:

Date: