

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday, 10 July, 2013 at 6.00 pm at Darby House, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors N A M England (Chair), S Davies, T J Hope and A D McClements

ST-01 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 13 December 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ST-02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors R C Evans, M B Hosken and R T Kiernan

ST-03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

ST-04 STANDARDS UPDATE

The Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report which provided the Committee with an update on matters relating to the ethical framework.

Since the report had been written, a further complaint had been received, bringing the total number of new code of conduct complaints made since January 2013 to five. The Independent Person had been consulted on the first four complaints received so far, none had been referred for investigation.

The short training session for elected Members on current Code of Conduct issues which was being scheduled for the autumn would also include training on bias and the rules on predetermination as set out in the Localism Act 2012.

In order to support their new roles, the Committee's two Independent Persons had been provided with a subscription to guidance and support services from Hoey Ainscough. The Council was due to host Hoey Ainscough's regional training session and places for both Independent Persons had been secured.

The Committee was also asked to consider and review its Terms of Reference, which suggested reducing the number of updates received from the Monitoring Officer to mirror the number of meetings per year and Members asked in what format they would prefer to receive future updates. In addition, the Code of Conduct was presented for consideration but the Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that there had been no major issues to imply that changes were warranted.

Members were keen to ensure accountability in the Monitoring Officer's review of complaints but recognised that it was important not to receive information that would prejudice the Committee in the event that a hearing was required. However, it was

felt important that the Members needed to understand the type of complaints being received, the decisions made in conjunction with the Independent Person, and any patterns identified.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that the report be noted; and**
- (b) that the Standards Committee's Terms of Reference be amended to refer to the receipt of twice yearly reports from the Monitoring Officer.**

The meeting ended at 6.23pm

Chairman:

Date: