

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday, 8 July, 2014 at 6.00 pm at Darby House, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors N A M England (Chair), K.R. Guy, T.J. Hope, R.T. Kiernan and A.D. McClements

ST-01 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ST-02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors S. Davies and M.B. Hosken

ST-03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

ST-04 STANDARDS UPDATE

The Legal Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report which provided the Committee with an update on matters relating to the ethical framework since the last meeting in November 2013.

As this was the first meeting of the new Municipal Year, the Committee was also asked to review its terms of reference, a copy of which was appended to the report. There had been no legislative or other changes arising from case law etc, nor any new best practice guidance, and therefore the Monitoring Officer was not proposing any changes to the terms of reference at present.

Since the last report to the Committee, three new formal Code of Conduct complaints against Parish/Town Councillors had been received, although the most recent one had been withdrawn. None of the complaints had been referred for investigation. In addition, the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer had continued to give advice and information to elected members, the public and officers from both the Borough and Parish Councils on Code of Conduct matters. In response to a question about the nature of the complaints that had been received, the Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that these usually arose out of situations in some parishes where there were ongoing issues between some Members and individual residents. They were generally complaints at the lower end of the scale, and there had been no instances where allegations of serious misconduct or fraudulent activity had been made.

A “refresher” training session for Borough Councillors took place on 20 November 2013, and was attended by 24 Members. There was little in the way of feedback, but some advice on interests was addressed after the training. Unless there were any significant changes to the ethical framework, it was proposed that no further Code of Conduct training would be provided until after the local elections in May 2015.

In relation to the Independent Person, the annual subscription to Hoey Ainscough to provide independent support and advice to the Independent Person and the Monitoring Officer had been renewed for a further year.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that no changes are required to the Committee's Terms of Reference;**
- (b) that the report be noted.**

The meeting ended at 6.11pm

Chairman:

Date: