

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday, 19 November, 2013 at 6.00 pm at Darby House, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors N A M England (Chair), S. Davies and M B Hosken

ST-05 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ST-06 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors R C Evans, T J Hope, R T Kiernan and A D McClements

ST-07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

ST-08 STANDARDS UPDATE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

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 last meeting in July 2013.

Since the last report to the Committee, two new formal Code of Conduct complaints against Parish/Town Councillors had been received. Neither complaint had been referred for investigation, and consultation with the Independent Person, Michael Tebbutt, had taken place where appropriate. 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. The Chair of the Committee had reviewed recent complaints and the assessments undertaken by the Monitoring Officer.

A “refresher” training session for Borough Councillors was taking place on 20 November, and would focus on personal interests, pre-determination and bias as well as identifying any emerging issues from the new ethical framework. The Chair advised that it was an opportunity for Members to provide feedback on what they wanted in terms of support and advice on standards and ethics. Feedback from the training session would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee. On 5 November 2013, the Council had hosted a development seminar for the Independent Person from all West Midlands authorities. This had been attended by the Independent Person for Telford & Wrekin and his Reserve, as well as the Monitoring Officer. Feedback from this event had been very positive.

Appended to the report was recent guidance issued by the Department for Communities & Local Government on “Openness and Transparency on Personal Interests”. It was designed to give basic, practical information to help councillors when registering their personal interests. This now included a requirement to specify trade union membership on the register of interests form. While this was not a legal

requirement, all Members needed to be aware of the guidance – and it would be reported at the training session on 20 November.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.12pm

Chairman:

Date: