

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday, 7 July 2015 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room G2, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

PRESENT: Councillors M J Smith (Chair), R J Sloan (Vice-Chair), S Barnes, A J Burford, N A M England, C P R Mollett and P J Scott

ST-01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor R T Kiernan.

ST-02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

ST-03 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 20 January 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ST-04 STANDARDS UPDATE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

The Deputy Monitoring Officer gave the apologies of the Monitoring Officer for his absence and presented the report on his behalf.

Complaints:- There had been no formal complaints since the publication of the report. Advice and information continued to be available to elected Members, members of the public and officers of borough and parish councils via the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Training:- As requested by this Committee, the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer had presented a training session on 18 May 2015 as part of the post-election Member induction process. 14 Members had attended, nine of which were newly elected. Members welcomed the provision of training but acknowledged that the intensity of the induction programme could be over-whelming and it was not always possible for members to juggle busy diaries to accommodate specific dates. At the request of Members, it was agreed that the Deputy Monitoring Officer would discuss arrangements for a further training session in the autumn with the Member Services Officer. The internal training session lasted approximately 45-60 minutes with questions and the session would not be dependent on numbers. The Committee encouraged all Members to attend.

DPI Forms:- The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that there were six outstanding DPI forms all other Councillors had returned their forms.. The Deputy Monitoring Officer described the legal obligations regarding submission of the form within 28 days of appointment. The Committee agreed that a reminder should be sent to the Councillors who had not yet submitted their forms. With regard to Town and Parish Councils, it was not possible at this stage to say how many were missing in total but

seven Councils had not submitted any forms at all. It was possible that the clerks were collecting forms to submit all together. All DPI forms would be publicly available via the Borough Council's website.

Code of Conduct Complaint Procedure:- The Deputy Monitoring Officer outlined the current complaints procedure. He informed the Committee that at the last meeting, Members had debated whether or not the Monitoring Officer should advise Members when a complaint was received regardless of whether it was dealt with under the Monitoring Officer's discretion and not referred to the Committee. Members considered that it was important for all Members to receive notification of complaints against them. It was considered that this was normal practice in other complaint systems and that disclosure reflected the Council's values. It would also allow the subject of the complaint to reflect on their behaviour accordingly. Members agreed that the disclosure should apply to borough and parish and town councillors. Members were unanimously in support of the changes outlined in Appendix 2 to the report.

Terms of Reference:- The Deputy Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that it was good practice to review the Terms of Reference on an annual basis but no changes were recommended.

RESOLVED – that

- (a) the contents of the report be noted;**
- (b) the Code of Conduct complaints process be updated to include the suggested amendments made at Appendix 2 of the report; and**
- (c) no changes be made to the Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee.**

The meeting ended at 6.28pm

Chairman:

Date: