

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

A

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday, 5 July, 2016 at 6pm in Meeting Room G3-G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors K S Sahota (Chair), M J Smith (Vice Chair), S Barnes, N A M England, R T Kiernan, C P R Mollett, P J Scott

In Attendance: Matthew Cumberbatch (Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

ST-10 Apologies for Absence

Councillor R J Sloan

ST-11 Declarations of Interest

None

ST-12 Minutes

It was noted that there was on-going work to develop guidance for Members on the use of social media. This was being taken forward by the Member Development Group which was due to meet early July.

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 9 February 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ST-13 STANDARDS UPDATE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER AND REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee received the report of the Monitoring Officer, presented by the Democratic and Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer. The report provided an update on work undertaken in relation to the ethical framework since the last meeting. The Committee noted the following points:

- Advice and information on the Code of Conduct continued to be provided to elected members, members of the public and officers from Borough and Parish Councils. It was reported that a downward trend in the number of complaints had started to emerge; no complaints had been received since the last meeting. It was felt that the pragmatic approach currently being taken brought about proportionality in terms of considering when complaints required further action and the type of action which was taken. The Committee was reassured of the current process and approach, and noted the opportunity available to the Chair to take a closer look at the process if desired/ necessary.
- Training on the Code of Conduct had successfully been delivered to Parish Councils and a request for further training sessions had been received from SALC. The

Deputy Monitoring Officer had agreed to continue to provide training, subject to the Committee's endorsement.

- The responsibility for the dismissal of senior officers had now been included in the remit of the Independent Person in dealing with the oversight of the Council's ethical governance. Training on the 'Role of the Independent Person' incorporating this element had been provided to one of the Independent Persons on 9th February.

The Committee discussed training for elected members. It was acknowledged that training requirements needed to be proportionate, particularly with regard to the members' full workloads and busy schedules. It was agreed that it would be preferable to ensure as far as possible, widespread familiarity with the Code of Conduct including regular communications to remind members. It was agreed that a training opportunity should be available to all councillors and various options were discussed including whether training could be fitted in with full Council meetings.

Terms of Reference

The Committee received the draft terms of reference at Appendix 1 of the report and noted the additional amendments tabled at the meeting in relation to powers and functions delegated to the Monitoring Officer. It was acknowledged that these did not constitute new delegations but merely set out what had been in place for some time..

The functions, powers and duties of the terms of reference were reviewed as drafted for the new constitution which would be placed for consideration by the full Council on 14th July. It was noted that there were no material changes to the previous terms of reference.

It was also noted that in the new constitution, delegations from Chief Officers would be set out in a separate document. The Committee acknowledged that this was a more straightforward process as changes to the delegation of powers did not require full Council ratification. Officer delegations would take effect following full Council and the Committee was reassured that measures were in place for committees that did not have meetings scheduled soon after July's Council meeting to confirm new delegations in due course.

Resolved

- a) That the contents of the report are noted**

- b) The terms of reference as attached to this report are recommended for approval by full Council as drafted when the revised Constitution is considered.**

- c) Training on the Code of Conduct and new social media guidance (currently under development) be delivered to Councillors**

The meeting ended at 6.23pm

Chairman:

Date: