

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2017 commencing at 7.04 pm

Present: Cllr. Gaywood (Chairman)

Cllrs. McGregor, Mrs. Morris and McGarvey

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Ball and Bosley

WELCOME

The Chairman welcome John Linehan, the appointed Independent Person for Code of Conduct complaints to the meeting.

1. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 9 February 2016, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

3. Monitoring Officer's Annual Report

The Monitoring Officer presented the twelfth Annual Report, which set out the role of the Monitoring Officer and provided an overview of the work of the Monitoring Officer, and the Standards Committee and the general governance arrangements of the Council during 2016. Members were advised that the current Monitoring Officer had joined the Council on 1 July 2016.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the 2015/16 annual letter from the Local Government Ombudsman set out that 21 complaints and enquiries had been received. Of the 21 complaints nine were closed after initial enquiries, five were referred back for local resolution, six were not upheld and one was upheld.

Members were advised that under the Localism Act 2011, the Council had appointed an Independent Person and a deputy to assist in considering complaints and who were consulted by the Monitoring Officer to help decide what action to. Members were reminded that at another Council a Member had been prosecuted for taking part and voting on a matter in which he had a disclosable pecuniary interest. In response to a question the Monitoring Officer advised that dispensations regarding disclosable pecuniary interests could be granted depending on the circumstances and that these would mostly be decided by the Standards Sub Committee for granting dispensations.

The Monitoring Officer provided details on the four complaints of Member misconduct received during 2016. Three complaints had been withdrawn and one had no further action due to insufficient evidence. In comparison there were six complaints received during 2015. Members were assured that robust procedures were in place to raise ethical standards, identify problems and to ensure that Members, Officers and the Public were aware of appropriate channels to raise concerns.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Members thanked the Monitoring Officer for the informative report.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that the report be noted.

Members took the opportunity to discuss the role of the Standards Committee going forward.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.40 PM

CHAIRMAN