
**MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 22 JUNE 2015 AT 10.05 A.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL
OFFICES, THORPE ROAD, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors R Heaney (Chairman), P Honeywood (Vice-Chairman), J Broderick, F Nicholls, G Steady and E Whitmore

In Attendance: Monitoring Officer (Lisa Hastings) and Senior Democratic Services Officer (Ian Ford)

Also in Attendance: C Gosling and J Wolton (Independent Persons)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no apologies received but it was noted that Councillor B A Poonian was not in attendance.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 MARCH 2015

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee, held on 16 March 2015, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest recorded at this time.

4. INTRODUCTION TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

There was submitted a report (A.1) by the Monitoring Officer which sought to enable the new membership of the Committee to familiarise themselves with the Council's Standards Framework and to agree the Committee's work plan for the 2015/2016 Municipal Year.

The Monitoring Officer informed Members that the seven elements of the Standards Framework were:

- The Members' Code of Conduct;
- The Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers for the Standards Committee and the Town and Parish Councils Sub-Committee;
- The work plan of the Committee;
- The Monitoring Officer Protocol;
- The Independent Person's Protocol;
- Member and Officer Relations Protocol; and
- The Complaints Procedure.

The overall approach of the arrangements was to seek:

- Information and training for Members and Officers to increase awareness and support good standards of behaviour;
- Proportionality – responses to complaints which were proportionate to their seriousness;
- Timeliness – with clear timescales for the various stages of complaints to be progressed;

- Checks, balances, reporting requirements and delegation to the Monitoring Officer of key elements of the process to maximise independence from the political process; and
- Early and informal intervention to resolve complaints wherever possible (including an expectation that Group Leaders will play a key role).

The Monitoring Officer stated that in order to enable the Committee to focus on promoting high standards of conduct as well as reacting to complaints it would be appropriate to discuss and agree a work plan for the Committee for 2015/16 and a draft work plan was submitted as Appendix 3 to the Monitoring Officer's report. Members of the Committee could also make a request to the Chairman and/or the Monitoring Officer for items to go on the agenda throughout the year, so long as it was appropriate and within the Committee's terms of reference.

The Monitoring Officer then informed Members of the following:

- (i) Approximate numbers of Member attendance at recent mandatory and non-mandatory training sessions and briefings for Members, confirmation that the Planning Committee members had all attended the organised session and that licensing training was due to be delivered in July;
- (ii) Outstanding complaints at the time of the District and Parish Elections; and
- (iii) The number of Members who had yet to submit their statutory Notice of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) forms, giving details of the DPIs to be included within the Council's Register of Interests, for which the statutory deadline had passed. This was also a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct. Details contained within the forms returned to the Monitoring Officer were now published on the Council's website.

Members then discussed issues including:

- (a) The potential need for a guidance note for Members dealing with enforcement issues within their Ward and the remit of their role and possible data protection implications; and
- (b) Declaration of Officers' Interests.

It was accordingly **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The contents of the report be noted;
- (b) The Annual Work Plan for 2015/2016, as set out in Appendix 3 to the Monitoring Officer's report, be approved, subject to the inclusion in the items for the September 2015 meeting of the following:
 - (i) An update on enforcement policies and the role of Ward Councillors; and
 - (ii) Current practice in respect of Officers' Declarations of Interest.
- (c) The Committee recommends that training should be arranged for Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees etc. on best practice in the conduct of meetings; and
- (d) The Committee endorses that the Monitoring Officer writes to those Members who have submitted their Notice of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest forms and that their respective Group Leaders be informed.

The meeting was declared closed at 11.01 a.m.

Chairman