

Minutes of Standards Committee

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 1 February 2012 starting at 6.30pm
Present: B Dearing (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Hirst
M Robinson
D T Smith (left at 7pm)
D Taylor

Parish Councillors:

E Law-Riding
D Moon
P Whittaker
P Young

Independent Members:

P Walsh
G Wilkinson

In attendance: Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

706 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

707 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

708 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

709 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

710 REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no references from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

711 IMPLEMENTING THE PROVISIONS OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report describing the changes arising from the Localism Act 2011 relating to standards and

governance and ways in which this Committee could contribute to planning the steps necessary for the Council to implement the new regime. The report informed Committee that the Localism Act 2011 made fundamental changes to the system for regulating the standard of conduct of elected and co-opted councillors. It outlined some of the major changes made by the Act with regards to the actual Standards Committee, the Code of Conduct, misconduct complaints, independent persons, register of Members interests, disclosure of interests and withdrawal from meetings, and dispensations. Committee discussed various aspects of the changes and acknowledged that this Committee should remain in situ until July 2012 when the new regime would take over. They expressed disappointment that under the new system, the same independent Members of this Committee could not be retained.

RESOLVED: That Committee recommend to Policy and Finance Committee that:

1. the Standards Committee and procedures set out for dealing with complaint should be retained as at present (with the amendment to procedures that a councillor should be told immediately about the nature of a complaint made against them but not the identity of the complainant) until July 2012 where the responsibilities of the Committee should be transferred to a new Standards Committee that should include Parish Council representation if possible;
2. the format of the current Code of Conduct should be retained with relevant modifications made to it to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011;
3. the procedure for dealing with misconduct complaints should be referred to the new Standards Committee;
4. the Monitoring Officer be authorised to put arrangements in hand to recruit two independent persons for the new regime in consultation with a working group of six Members comprising Mr Dearing and Mrs Walsh from the Standards Committee, two representatives from Policy and Finance Committee and two representatives from Personnel Committee;
5. action be deferred on action relating to the register of interest/dispensations/standing order issues, pending further regulations, with a report to be submitted to Full Council on 24 April 2012; and
6. any changes to the Council's constitution be considered by existing the Standards Committee if timing permits.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Diane Rice (414418).