

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
12th December 2012

Present: Councillors: Brian Donnelly (Chairman), David Coldwell (Vice Chairman), Andrew Baldwin, Leonard Crosbie, Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillors: Sheila Matthews, Claire Vickers

Co-opted advisory members

Present: Parish Council representatives: Val Court, Isabel Glenister
Independent persons: Paul Byford, Mary Jagger

SC/13 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19th September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SC/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

SC/15 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman congratulated Christie Redley, Standards Supports Officer, on her new post at Transport for London and thanked her for all her valuable work in supporting the Committee.

SC/16 **MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Local Review Sub-Committee on 8th August 2012 and 20th September 2012, and of the Local Assessment Sub-Committee held on 17th October 2012 were received.

SC/17 **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent matters to be considered.

SC/18 **STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION**

The list was noted.

SC/19 **ETHICAL FRAMEWORK UPDATE**

The Monitoring Officer presented the report on developments in the ethical

SC/19 Ethical Framework Update (cont.)

framework that affected the role and activities of Councillors and the Council's business, including:

- Training and awareness: Recent training was discussed, including feedback from an Independent Persons Workshop that took place in September.
- Local assessment, review, other action, investigations and determinations: Since the last meeting, the Local Assessment Sub-Committee had met three times to consider 18 cases and the Local Review Sub-Committee had met once to review 14 cases. Three cases had been referred for Other Action in the form of training. It was noted that a review of the Council's new Standards Regime under the Localism Act 2011 would take place next year.
- Parish Clerks' Meetings: The Monitoring Officer had attended the Society of Local Council Clerks' meeting on 29th June 2012 and provided an update on the new Standards regime.
- Minor Revisions to the Code of Members' Conduct: The Monitoring Officer advised that under current legislation, owning a property in the District would be classified as a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and would affect Members' involvement in decisions relating to a number of matters including setting council tax. It was therefore recommended that a sub-paragraph be inserted into the Code which would allow Members to debate on such matters without the need to obtain dispensations. Parish Councils had been advised to make similar changes to enable all parish councillors to take part in setting the precept.
- Register of Interests: Members noted that these had been published for all District Councillors, and that a majority of Parish Councillors had also completed the relevant forms. It was agreed that Local Members would encourage those Parish Councillors who had still to complete the forms to do so. It was noted that where a Parish Council did not have a website the District Council published the Register of Interests on their behalf.
- Changes to LGO Complaints Procedure: Members were advised about the LGO revised complaints procedure.
- LGO case summaries: A case summary was provided.
- Localism Act: A Constitution update was provided.
- Protocol between Nottinghamshire Monitoring Officers and Police: The Protocol was noted.
- Making it easier to set up town and parish councils: The DCLG consultation paper was considered.
- Freedom of Information requests.
- Performance management.
- Data Protection Act 1998.
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.
- Work Programme update:

The Work Programme presented to the Committee included some items that needed updating. It was agreed that a review of the Standards Regime

SC/19 Ethical Framework Update (cont.)

next year would be added to the programme and the programme updated as necessary.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the following text be added to the Code of Members' Conduct:

- “15(2) You may participate in any business of your authority that relates to the functions of your authority in respect of:
- (a) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
 - (b) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
 - (c) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
 - (d) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
 - (e) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
 - (f) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992”.

REASONS

- (i) To ensure that the Committee, the Members of the Council and others to whom the report is circulated are kept up to date with developments in the ethical framework;
- (ii) To promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst members.

The meeting finished at 10.55am having commenced at 10.00am.

CHAIRMAN