

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

3rd December 2014

Present: Councillors: Brian Donnelly (Chairman), David Coldwell (Vice-Chairman), Andrew Baldwin, Sheila Matthews, Godfrey Newman, Tricia Youtan

Advisory Members

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

Apologies: Councillors: Brian O'Connell

SC/17 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10th September 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SC/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

SC/19 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Local Review Sub-Committee held on 10th September 2014 were received.

SC/20 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OR THE MONITORING OFFICER**

The Chairman announced that this was Paul Byford's last meeting as an Independent Person and thanked him for his efforts over the years, and valuable contribution to the work of the Committee.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee of ongoing changes to the Legal Department that included a restructuring of the department, a customer led service and 'paper light' working. There was currently a fully staffed temporary structure in place.

The Monitoring Officer advised that he had issued dispensations to the four dual hatted Councillors to enable them to debate and vote on the relocation of HDC office premises at the Council meeting on 9th October. He also confirmed that he would issue dispensations, on the basis of public interest and democratic accountability, to those District Councillors who were also Parish Councillors so they could debate and vote on the proposed grants to Parish Councils for 2015/16 at the Council meeting on 10th December.

SC/20 To receive any announcements from the Chairman of the Committee, the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer (Cont.)

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that responses to the 'Members Survey and Support Survey' had been received from approximately 25% of Members. It was agreed that those who had not responded yet would be contacted individually.

The Monitoring Officer updated Members on the recruitment process for a new Independent Person. It was agreed that the Monitoring Officer would write to the Chairman of HALC to ask for their help by contacting Parish Councils, with a view of publicising the role on their websites. Other ways of filling the role were also discussed including advertising in local newspapers and approaching previous applicants. It was confirmed that the interview panel would include the Chairman of the Committee, Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition.

SC/21 **ETHICAL FRAMEWORK UPDATE**

The Monitoring Officer presented the report on developments in the ethical framework that affected the role and activities of Councillors and the Council's business, including:

- Training and awareness: It was noted that an Induction of Councillors Working Group had been set up in anticipation of the May elections. Members emphasised the importance of training in ethical governance for new Councillors. The need for ongoing training for all Councillors was also discussed.

The Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer intended to visit local Parish and Neighbourhood Councils to offer training. Members suggested that two seminars on the Code of Conduct, one in the south of the district and one in the north, could be arranged for District and Parish Councillors.

- Local assessment, review, other action, investigations and determinations: There had been two new complaints received and assessed by the Monitoring Officer, and one complaint reviewed by the Local Review Sub-Committee since the last ethical update on 10th September 2014.
- Parish Clerks' Meetings: The Deputy Monitoring Officer had attended the Society of Local Council Clerks' meeting on 14th October 2014. The Annual Meeting of HDC and HALC had been held on 11th November.
- Register of Interests: All District Councillors had returned their Register of Interests update forms and these had been uploaded onto the Council website. Parish Councils with websites were being encouraged by the Monitoring Officer to ensure their websites were updated.
- Case summaries – October 2014 and November 2014: Members noted the case updates from other local authorities at Appendix 4 of the report.

SC/21 Ethical Framework update (Cont.)

- Work Programme update: Members noted the updated Work Programme, in particular the recommendation to prepare an annual report for presentation to full Council at the end of the municipal year. This was considered good practice and the Chairman agreed that a report should be prepared.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

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 11.38 having commenced at 10.00am.

CHAIRMAN