

**Standards Committee**  
**30 NOVEMBER 2016**

Present: Councillors: Tricia Youtan (Chairman), David Coldwell (Vice-Chairman), Christian Mitchell, Mike Morgan, Godfrey Newman, John Donaldson and Kieran Diamond

Apologies: Councillor Brian Donnelly, and Mary Jagger and Val Court

SC/13 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> September were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SC/14 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

SC/15 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

SC/16 **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN UPDATE 2016-2017**

The Customer Services Manager reported on the number and nature of complaints received by the Council that had been made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) in quarters one and two of 2016/17. Only four complaints had been investigated so far, none of which had been upheld (one had been referred back to the Council due to insufficient evidence).

In 2015/16 there had been a total of 18 complaints of which only five had been investigated: three had been upheld, and two not upheld.

Members noted that complaints were managed proactively so that there was engagement with customers, and to ensure that lessons were learned from root causes of complaints. The Customer Services Manager advised that all staff were obliged to attend one of a series of Customer Services training sessions that had been arranged recently.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

## REASONS

To ensure that the Committee has the necessary information to ensure that complaints can be made to the Council with ease and complaints are dealt with appropriately. In addition the Council uses its complaints process to improve services delivery.

### SC/17 **THE 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.

Training and awareness: The Monitoring Officer had given training on the importance of Ethical Governance and the Code of Conduct to two parish councils, and approximately half the parish councils had now asked for training to be arranged. It was suggested that those parishes close to each other could receive training together. The Monitoring Officer would inform the Parish Representatives and Independent Persons of the training dates to enable them to attend in support if they wished to do so.

Local assessments: Members noted the list of complaints against parish councillors which had been assessed by the Local Assessment Sub-Committee. Only three had been received since the last meeting of the Committee, one of which had been withdrawn. Members were mindful of the spike of complaints received earlier in the year and discussed the financial cost to the council.

The Committee congratulated the Monitoring Officer and Governance Project Manager, who had attended the Lawyers in Local Government Awards in Leeds on 18<sup>th</sup> November, where Horsham District had been runners-up in the Governance Lawyer/Team of the year category.

Members discussed the Standing Orders of a parish council that prohibited spouses from sitting on the same committee. The Monitoring Officer advised he had no authority over the content of Parish Council Standing Orders which was a matter for the Parish Council.

## 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.

SC/18 **ANALYSIS OF SANCTIONS BEFORE AND AFTER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011**

The Monitoring Officer advised Members of the sanctions that had been available prior to the Localism Act 2011, and compared these to the sanctions that were currently available under common law. After careful consideration Members concluded no further action was to be taken.

RESOLVED

That no further action be taken.

*The meeting closed at 10.38 am having commenced at 10.00 am*

CHAIRMAN