

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 6 JULY 2015

PRESENT:- Councillors David Wood (Chair), Michael Bray, Fay Howard, Richard Hurley, Teresa Page, Kevin Parry, Maureen Penny, Carol Shelley and Vera Tomlinson. Messrs Trevor Davies, Mr David Dawson, Mr Richard Hailstone and Mike Compton.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eric Shaw and Messrs Paul Morris and Keith Strickland.

1. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

4. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved - That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the respective paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph Nos.</u>	<u>Minute No.</u>
9	1 and 2	8

5. Standards Committee Annual Report 2014/15

The Committee was asked to consider its Draft Annual Report 2014/15, which document provided a record of the work of the Standards Committee for the period June 2014 to May 2015. In particular, the Committee's attention was drawn to the conclusion of the review of the Council's arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints, that the Council's current scheme was both functional and effective and that, subject to some minor amendments, it was, in fact, preferred over the revised scheme suggested by the external consultants in their review report.

Resolved – That the Draft Standards Committee Annual Report 2014/15 be agreed and that the Director of Law and Democratic Services be authorised to finalise the document for publication on the Council's website.

6. Annual Work Programme

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services inviting the Committee to agree its Work Programme for 2015/16.

Resolved – That the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2015/16, as appended to the report, be agreed.

7. Ethical Update Report

The Committee received a report from the Director of Law and Democratic Services providing an update on matters relating to the Ethical Framework, including:

- Dispensations.
- The membership of the Standards Committee.
- Annual Governance Statement.
- The Council's Whistleblowing Policy.
- Training – Induction Training and General Training issues.
- Councillors' Register of Interests.
- New Regulations relating to the dismissal of a statutory officer.

Resolved – (1) That the Ethical Framework update be noted.

(2) That the draft Annual Governance Statement, attached to the report at Appendix 2, be approved to be signed off by the Leader and Chief Executive in September 2015.

(3) That, with regard to specific references in the draft Annual Governance Statement, the Member Development Advisory Group be invited to consider the concerns of some members about the effectiveness of member training and development, and the need to clarify the member functions and roles.

(4) That the Member Development Advisory Group be asked to consider the practicalities and possibility of extending some member training events to include Parish Councils, where such training might be of benefit to Parish Councillors in fulfilling their role, particularly in relation to their interactions with the Borough Council.

(5) That the updated version of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, attached to the report at Appendix 3, be approved and that the updated policy be publicised through the Core Brief and Manager's Bulletin and other publications as appropriate.

(6) That the review of the Whistleblowing Policy be included in the Standards Committee's periodic review of the Council's Codes and Protocols.

(7) That members be advised of the extent to which the whistleblowing policy document, and the details of the avenues available to staff to raise concerns, are publicised amongst employees, particularly with regard to employees who are not accommodated at the civic campus or major council facilities.

8. Ethical Compliance Report

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services regarding the outcome of various ethical framework compliance matters, including the details of Whistleblowing cases, breaches of the member/officer relations protocol and Code of Conduct Complaints received since the last Committee and the outcome of any completed investigations in relation to these.

Resolved – That the Ethical Framework Compliance report be noted.