

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT:- Councillors David Wood (Chair), Fay Howard, Colin Lovell, Kevin Parry, Gary Sumner, Vera Tomlinson, Joe Tray and Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Mr Keith Strickland, Mr Paul Morris, Mr Richard Hailstone and Mick Compton.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Teresa Page, Mr Trevor Davies and Mr David Dawson.

10. 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.

11. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

12. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

13. 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	9

14. Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances: Membership

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report providing an update on the current membership of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances and seeking the Standards Committee's approval to the appointment of a Lay Representative to serve on the Panel following the resignation of Mr David Wilkie.

Resolved – (1) That the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' Allowances be noted and that the appointment of Mr David Body to the

currently vacant Lay Representative position be approved.

(2) That the Monitoring Officer's advice, responding to a question put by Councillor Vera Tomlinson, that it was a matter for this Independent Panel to determine who should be invited, and/or allowed, to attend its meetings, be noted. That notices of future meetings of the Panel be appropriately endorsed explaining this position and that, where they wish to attend meetings of bodies they are not appointed to, members be reminded of the convention of contacting the Chair beforehand with such request to attend.

15. Ethical Framework Update

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.
- Code of Conduct Complaints.
- Codes and Protocols.
- The Council's Ethical Audit Self-Assessment.
- Changes to Chief Executive Reporting Structure.
- Training – Induction Training and General Training issues.

So far as the update in relation to the changes to the Chief Executive's reporting structure was concerned, members commented on the proposal that attendance of the s151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer at Corporate Management Team meetings be by invitation only on an ad hoc basis. The Monitoring Officer reported that the Chief Executive had confirmed his firm commitment to ensuring these statutory officers, together with the statutory Director of Public Health, continued to have direct access to him as and when required. It was noted that the existing Corporate Management Team structure would remain in situ until an appointment was made to the post of Corporate Director Resources and Transformation, and that the Chief Executive had confirmed that the Monitoring Officer would remain a member of the Corporate Management Team at least until then and that the situation would be reviewed when the Corporate Director Resources and Transformation took up post.

Standards Committee members noted that Special Committee had asked that the Chief Executive report back to the Special Committee on the effectiveness of the structure in facilitating representation with regard to s151 and Monitoring Officer functions, and asked to be kept informed.

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

(2) That, with regard to the granting of dispensations to Councillors to speak and vote on matters which they would otherwise be excluded due to a declarable pecuniary interest:

- (i) the Director of Law and Democratic Services be authorised to invite existing members to apply for dispensations on the subject matter of Council Tax, and to grant these and any additional applications received until 6 November 2020.
- (ii) it be agreed that any dispensations granted under these conditions be for the maximum period of four years, ending on 6 November 2020.
- (iii) it be noted that the Director of Law and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee, will continue to be authorised to grant applications for urgent dispensations on any subject matter in between meetings of this Committee. Any such dispensations will be reported to the next scheduled meeting of this Committee.

(iv) the Director of Law and Democratic Services advise the Town and Parish Clerks of the need to arrange similar applications and determination of dispensations in respect of Town and Parish Councillors setting Parish budgets and precepts.

(3) That, in order to facilitate the Standards Committee's annual review of the Council's Codes and Protocols, and in line with the procedure utilised for previous reviews, the Monitoring Officer consult on each of the Codes and Protocols with relevant officers, the political groups on the Council and with Parish Councils, and recommend any valid changes to the Standards Committee at its meeting in January 2017.

(4) That, further to (3) above, members of the Committee be invited to submit to the Monitoring Officer the details of any particular issues that they would wish to be considered as part of the annual review of the codes and protocols.

(5) That the latest Ethical Audit Desktop Analysis, attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be accepted.

16.

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 and outcomes of Whistleblowing cases and Code of Conduct Complaints received since the last Committee meeting.

Resolved – That the Ethical Framework Compliance report be noted.