

**MINUTES EXTRACT - STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 26 MARCH 2012**

PRESENT:- Mr Keith Carby (Chair), Mr Trevor Davies (Vice-Chair), Mr Paul Morris, Mr Mike Compton, Mr Gerry Eyles, Mr Richard Hailstone, Councillor Sinead Darker, Councillor Fay Howard, Councillor Peter Stoddart and Councillor Kevin Small.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr David Dawson.

**25. Question and Answer Session - Leader of the Council and Chief Executive**

The Leader of the Council, and the Chief Executive, attended the meeting to discuss the Council's approach to ethical governance, and their key priorities in relation to ensuring that high ethical standards are promoted and maintained within the Council.

The discussion included:

- An update on Stronger Together, the new Council management structure and way of working from 1 April 2012, and the context and reasons for these changes.
- The role for Town and Parish Councils under the Localism Act, and the need for close working with the Council, in particular in Localities.
- The context in which the Council was operating with regard to the economic climate, budget pressures and a heightened political environment, and the importance of the public understanding the different roles of officers and Councillors, and the democratic mandate held by Councillors.
- The continuing growth of social media, and the difficulties that presents for Councillors knowing how and when to engage, and ensuring that their contributions are compliant with the Media Guidelines for Councillors and the Member Code of Conduct.

The Committee noted that the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive both considered that the Protocol of Member / Officer Relations was fit for purpose. In addition, the discussion on social media endorsed an earlier recommendation by the Committee that the new Members Code of Conduct, to be drafted when the Regulations under the Localism Act were published, should include specific reference to use of social media.

Resolved - That the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive both be thanked for attending the Committee and answering the questions of the Committee.