

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE****HELD: 26 NOVEMBER 2012**

Start: 4.30pm

Finish: 5.10pm

**PRESENT:**

Councillors: Grant (Chairman)

Mrs Atherley	Kay
Fillis	Savage
J Hodson	

In attendance: Mr S Ibbs (Independent Person)  
Mr S Garvey (Reserve Independent Person)Officers: Managing Director (People and Places) (Mrs G Rowe)  
Borough Solicitor (Mr T Broderick)  
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)**19. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

**20. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Members noted the termination of membership of Councillors Davis and Coyle and the appointment of Councillors J Hodson and Savage for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups.

**21. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

**22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interests.

**23. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 16 July 2012 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**24. COMPLAINTS - STATISTICS**

The Committee considered the complaint statistics to 2012/13 as set out at page 75 of the Book of Reports. Members were advised that one allegation had been considered in the relevant period under the previous standards regime complaints processes. The Assessment Sub-Committee met in June and found no breach in relation to the complaint.

RESOLVED: That the statistics be noted.

**25. GUIDE FOR COUNCILLORS - OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY ON PERSONAL INTERESTS**

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Managing Director (People and Places) and Borough Solicitor which gave details of the circulation of 'Openness and transparency on personal interests – A guide for councillors' issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to all Councillors, Parish Councillors and Parish Clerks, as detailed at pages 77 to 88 of the Book of Reports.

RESOLVED: That the guide 'Openness and transparency on personal interests', attached at Appendix 1, be noted.

**26. REVIEW OF NEW STANDARDS COMMITTEE BY THE MANAGING DIRECTOR (PEOPLE AND PLACES) IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADER AND LEADER OF THE LABOUR GROUP - 3 DECEMBER 2012**

The Managing Director (People and Places) explained the background to the item in respect of the decision of Council on 19 June 2012 set down in the circulated Minute 16, in relation to the introduction of the new Standards regime as required by the Localism Act 2011 that established a Standards Committee and related arrangements and sought the views of the Committee in relation to the operation of the arrangements prior to the review scheduled to take place on 3 December 2012.

RESOLVED: A. That the decision of Council of 19 June 2012 be noted.

B. That a further review of the Standards Committee and related arrangements be undertaken in 18 months, subject to need.

**27. ANNUAL MONITORING TRAINING REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of the joint report of the Managing Director (People and Places) and the Borough Solicitor which detailed training undertaken to date and its effectiveness in relation to the code of conduct and standards.

Members discussed the effectiveness of the training, particularly the seminar sessions, that had been undertaken and the case studies used within those training sessions. Members welcomed the continuation of this type of training with Borough and Parish Councillors and the circulation of the training packs which had acted as a good reference tool for Members, especially those recently provided in relation to the changes affected by the Localism Act 2011.

RESOLVED: That the training undertaken and the evaluation of it be noted and that the established approach to training be continued.

**28. UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK - WORKSHOP 23 OCTOBER 2012**

Consideration was given to the feedback provided by the Independent Person (IP) and Reserved Independent Person (RIP) in relation to participation in a workshop 'Understanding the Local Standards Framework' on 23 October 2012. The presentation was supported by a report as contained on page 103 of the Book of Reports.

Following the presentation a discussion ensued into the role and responsibilities of the IP and RIP under the new Standards regime; the complaints procedure and proportionality of the work involved in relation to their investigation of complaints.

It was noted that the procedures in relation to the investigation of any complaints under the Code of Conduct were currently being updated.

RESOLVED: That the presentation by the Independent Person and Reserved Independent Person be noted.

## **29. DISPENSATIONS PARISHES**

Consideration was given to the extract from Part 1 Localism Act 2011 (“the Act”) in relation to Dispensations. The Managing Director (People and Places) provided an overview of the regulations and the responsibilities in relation to dispensations at the Parish tier.

A discussion ensued in relation to the dispensations that may be granted by the Parishes under “the Act” and the role of the Parish Clerks in keeping the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee informed of those dispensations. It was felt that to maintain standards and ensure transparency and consistency across all Parish Councils in the Borough that each Parish Clerk should ensure that the Monitoring Officer is kept abreast of any dispensations awarded by them.

RESOLVED: A. That all Parish Clerks be requested to inform the Managing Director (People and Places) of any dispensations that are granted to Parish Councillors (or co-opted members).

B. That the Managing Director (People and Places) write to the Parish Clerks informing them of the Committee’s decision and the process.

## **30. PARISH COUNCILS - ADOPTION OF THE CODE**

Members noted the Adoption of the Code of Conduct under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 by all Parish Councils in the Borough, as set down on page 97 of the Book of Reports.

RESOLVED: That the adoption of the West Lancashire Borough Council and Parish Councils Members’ Code of Conduct by all Parish Councils in West Lancashire be noted.

**31. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2012/13. It was agreed that the Committee should meet every six months with additional meetings, to be held on an ad hoc basis, should the need arise.

- RESOLVED: A. That the Work Programme for 2012/13 be noted.
- B. That the Standards Committee be scheduled to meet every six months.

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Chairman