

Minutes of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	4 December 2012
Present:	The Mayor (Councillor Joan Grimshaw) – Ex Officio – In the Chair Councillors K Audin, S Carter, T Holt, A Quinn, J Walton and Y Wright
Independent Member:	Mr D Gremson
Apologies:	Councillors A Audin and S Smith
Public Attendance:	There were no members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

S.565 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Walton informed the Committee that he may need to take advice as to whether or not he should declare an interest in respect of S.571, "Complaints against Members."

S.566 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no Members present to ask questions under this item.

S.567 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Delegated decision:

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 3 April 2012 be approved and signed a correct record.

S.568 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER AND INDEPENDENT PERSON

It was reported that at Council on 17 October 2012, the following appointments had been made:-

Independent Member of the Standards Committee – Mr D Gremson

Independent Person – Mr K Wainwright

Delegated decision:

That the report be noted.

S.569 STANDARDS PROCEDURE – REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which sought to provide further guidance on Standards Procedures following the implementation of new procedures from 1 July 2012, in line with the Localism Act 2011.

Specifically, Members were asked to comment on the imposition of a time limit for complaints and how much information should be passed to a Subject Member following receipt of an allegation.

Delegated decisions:

1. That a time limit for complaints be introduced of 6 months with the proviso that this can be waived in exceptional circumstances.
2. That the level of detail to pass to a Member following a complaint against him/her be at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer.
3. That the Monitoring Officer consider how guidance can be amended to enable a link to be made with the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy.
4. That guidance on Hearing Panels be drafted.
5. That the current arrangements be the subject of review in 12 months time.

S.570 GENERAL NOTICE OF REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

It was reported that the introduction in the Localism Act of revised definition and arrangements for the registering of interests had in turn necessitated the revision of the current form, which Members were required to complete annually. A draft form was submitted for consideration.

Delegate decision:

That the draft form be approved and adopted for immediate effect.

S.571 COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS

The Monitoring Officer reported that seven complaints had been received since 1 July 2012, of which six had been referred to the Standards Sub-Committee for assessment. Of these, one had been rejected by the Sub-Committee and one had been rejected by the Monitoring Officer. One had been resolved informally. The others were at various stages of the process.

In response to issues raised by Councillor Walton, it was reported that the deliberations of a Standards Assessment Sub-Committee were recorded through a Decision Notice rather than through minutes, in line with the procedure recommended by the former Standards for England. With regard to

representation, every effort would be made to achieve political balance but this would depend on Member availability.

Delegated decision:

That the report be noted.

S.572 STANDARDS ISSUES

No issues were raised under this item.

COUNCILLOR J GRIMSHAW

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.15 pm)