

Minutes of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	4 February 2014
Present:	The Mayor (Councillor S Briggs) – Ex Officio – In the Chair Councillors A Audin, K Audin, D Cassidy, D Gunther, and Y Wright
Independent Member:	Mr D Gremson
Apologies:	Councillors Jones and Walton
Public Attendance:	There was one member of the public in attendance at the meeting.

S.737 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Delegated decision:

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 7 February 2013 be approved and signed a correct record.

S.738 SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Delegated decision:

That the minutes of the Standards Consideration Sub-Committee of 12 March 2013 and the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee of 18 March, 16 April and 2 December 2013, be noted.

S.739 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

S.740 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Councillor Walker asked for the outcome of two complaints made against him to be recorded. The complaints had been referred by the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee for investigation. The investigator concluded that Councillor Walker had not breached the Code of Conduct and these findings had been confirmed by the Standards Consideration Sub-Committee.

S.741 MONITORING OFFICER'S PROTOCOL

A report was submitted which set out proposals for minor amendments to the Monitoring Officer's Protocol, some of which were necessary following responsibilities placed upon the Monitoring Officer by the Localism Act 2011.

Delegated decision:

That the Summary of main Monitoring Officer's functions as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

S.742 REVISIONS TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which recommended, in light of recent complaints, the re-introduction into the Code of a requirement for members to behave with respect towards others.

Recommendation to Council:

Under Section 3 of the Code of Conduct (General Obligations), the following provision be included:-

"3.1 You must not:.....

(e) Behave in a way that a reasonable person would regard as disrespectful."

S.743 GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS ON USE OF COUNCIL RESOURCES

A report was submitted which set out draft guidance for Councillors the use of Council resources.

Recommendation to Council:

That the draft guidance be approved for issue to councillors and inclusion in the Constitution subject to amendment/clarification on the following:-

- Page 1 - Clarity on resources in the public domain;
- Page 1 - Use by Members of IT facilities;
- Page 3 - Clarity on publicity following the publication of an election notice.

S.744 REPORTING OF SUB-COMMITTEE DECISIONS

A report was submitted which set out how the decisions of Standards Sub-Committees would be recorded so that there was a public record of the proceedings as well as a detailed Decision Notice.

Delegated decision:

That the report be noted.

S.745 "ERRANT COUNCILLORS AND THE NEW STANDARDS REGIME"

A paper by Clive Sheldon QC was submitted which highlighted cases dealt with under the new Standards regime and some of the deficiencies inherent in the new system. It also highlighted challenges posed by social media.

The Monitoring Officer reported that she would forward information on a case recently referred to the High Court.

Delegated decision:

That the report be noted.

S.746 TRAINING – FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

Reference was made to the Standards training which had taken place on Monday, 16 December 2013, and which had been undertaken by Simon Goacher of Weightmans. Sixteen members had been unavailable and a further session would be organised by the Monitoring Officer on their behalf. Feedback for the session on 16 December was on the whole very positive.

Delegated decision:

That the report be noted.

COUNCILLOR S BRIGGS

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 7.50 pm)