

Minutes



To: All Members of the Standards Committee, Chief Executive, Chief Officers

From: Legal, Democratic & Statutory Services
Ask for: Elaine Shell
Ext: 25565

STANDARDS COMMITTEE 27 FEBRUARY 2017

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

R H Beeching (Vice-Chairman), D J Hewitt (Chairman), A Plancey, L Reefe (substituting for N Bell), D T F Scudder,

OTHERS PRESENT

Independent Person: T Morris

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Standards Committee meeting on 27 February 2017 as circulated, copy annexed, conclusions were reached and are recorded below:

Note: No conflicts of interest were declared by any member of the Committee in relation to the matters on which decisions were reached at this meeting.

PART I ('OPEN') BUSINESS

1. MINUTES

- 1.1 The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 22 February 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

[Officer Contact: Kathryn Pettitt, Chief Legal Officer (Tel: 01992 555527)]

- 2.1 The Committee received a report which sought its views on the revised Code of Conduct for members and requested that it ask Council to approve the revised Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 The Chief Legal Officer introduced the report explaining the background as to the proposed revisions to the Code of Conduct for Members. The committee

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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heard that the current Code of Conduct for Members was adopted by Council on 15 May 2012 and came into effect on 1 July 2012. The Council chose at that time to adopt the template Code of Conduct which had been produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government. Following a recent review of the Code, discussions with members, the Independent Person, consideration of the nature of the complaints that have been raised since 2012 and consideration of Codes of Conduct adopted by other authorities, the Chief Legal Officer considered that the Code of Conduct should be amended as set out in this Report.

- 2.3 There was discussion about the necessity for members who were processing personal data on their own behalf (e.g. in relation to dealing with matters relating to their division) to register with the Information Commissioner's Office as data controllers under the Data Protection Act 1998. Members requested that guidance be issued as part of the induction programme for new members in May 2017 as to when they should register in their own right with the Information Commissioner under the Data Protection Act 1998 and when the registration fee could be reimbursed by the County Council.

2.4 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee recommends to Council:-

1. That subject to the following amendments:
 - 1.1 replace the word 'private' in paragraph 2.7 with the word 'personal'
 - 1.2 reword paragraph 3.2 so that it reads:

'You must comply with all other policies of or guidance issued by the authority (or part of any such policy or guidance) which sets out required conduct or standards from members'

that Council adopts the Code of Conduct for Members attached as Annex 1 to the Report with effect from the date that Members assume office following the election on 4 May 2017 and that the revised Code of Conduct be adopted as Annex 18 to the Constitution.

2. That the Chief Legal Officer be authorised to make any amendments necessary to ensure that the change mentioned in 1 above is reflected consistently throughout the Constitution.

3. **GUIDANCE ON MEMBER INTERESTS**

[Officer Contact: Kathryn Pettitt, Chief Legal Officer (Tel: 01992 555527)]

- 3.1 The Committee received a report which sought its views on the draft guidance notes in preparation relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI's).

- 3.2 Members of the Council noted that they were required by law to declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. Whilst the responsibility was on each member individually to decide on what information should be included on their Disclosable Pecuniary Interest form the Chief Legal Officer has been asked to issue some guidance notes to members. Members discussed the form and different categories under which interests should be disclosed.

RESOLVED

- 3.3 The Committee noted the form

4. STANDARDS UPDATE

[Officer Contact: Kathryn Pettitt, Chief Legal Officer (Tel: 01992 555527)]

- 4.1 The Committee received a report updating them on issues relating to the standards regime including the number and types of complaints that had been received since April 2015, the review of the protocol with Hertfordshire Police relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Offences, the inclusion of a reminder to declare interests on all Reports and training for members on standards matters after the May election.

- 4.2 During discussion members suggested that the issue of good communication, could be covered in the members training sessions.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

5. OTHER PART I BUSINESS

- 4.1 There was no other business.

**KATHRYN PETTITT
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

CHAIRMAN _____

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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