

Standards Committee

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 2021 AT ONLINE.

Present:

Cllr Richard Britton, Cllr Derek Brown OBE, Cllr Andrew Bryant, Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Paul Oatway QPM (Chairman), Cllr Fred Westmoreland, Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Mr Richard Baxter, Mr Philip Gill MBE and Mr Michael Lockhart

31 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Howard Greenman and Ruth Hopkinson.

32 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2021 and the minutes of the Hearing Sub-Committee held on 17 March 2021 were presented for consideration. It was noted that the Hearing Sub-Committee had been an unusual case where a Review Sub-Committee had recommended the Hearing go ahead even though the Subject Member had resigned as a parish councillor.

It was then,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting on 4 February 2021 as a true and correct record.

To receive the minutes of the Hearing Sub-Committee held on 17 March 2021.

33 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

34 **Chairman's Announcements**

Through the Chair there were the following announcements:

To note that a further Hearing Sub-Committee was held on 7 April 2021, which resolved that no breach had occurred in that case. The Chairman commented that this was third Hearing in the past year, after four years without a Hearing being held.

To note that the Constitution, in particular Part 2, would be updated to reflect recent changes to the Senior Officer Management Structure.

To note that the Monitoring Officer, Ian Gibbons, would be retiring from the Council in May 2021 after 33 years' service. The Chairman paid tribute to the advice, support and hard work Ian had provided across many years, with further tributes made at the end of the meeting.

35 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

36 **Recruitment of Independent Persons**

At its meeting on 7 October 2020 the Committee delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman arrangements for the recruitment of three Independent Persons appointed under s28(7) of the Localism Act to assist with the determination Code of Conduct complaints.

The Chairman detailed that an advertisement had taken place in February-March 2021, and there had been a significant number of applications for the positions, many of high quality.

Nine applicants had been interviewed, and the Chairman thanked Councillors Richard Britton and Stuart Wheeler for sitting on the interview panel, and to Ian Gibbons, Monitoring Officer, and Caroline Baynes, current Independent Person, for supporting that process.

The panel recommended the appoint of three applicants, and the Committee's endorsement was sought to make that recommendation to Full Council for terms beginning in May 2021.

The Chairman also expressed thanks to the Independent Persons who had not sought reappointment after serving two terms, Caroline Baynes and Stuart Middleton, and would write a letter of appreciation on behalf of the Committee.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To recommend that Council appoint the following candidates as Independent Persons:

**Patricia Bunche
Tony Drew
Damian Kearney**

37 **Urgent Items**

The Chairman led tributes to the Monitoring Officer, Ian Gibbons, who would be retiring in May after 33 years' service with the Council. Members gave deep thanks to Mr Gibbons for his hard work, patience and support particularly to Members ever since the Unitary Council had been formed in 2009, and his service beforehand, wished him very well in his well-earned retirement.

The Chairman also took the opportunity to note that the advertisement for the four co-opted member positions would be public shortly, and expressed his thanks to the existing co-opted members, particularly for their assistance with Code of Conduct complaints: Richard Baxter, Philip Gill MBE, Michael Lockhart and Pam Turner.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 10.15 am)

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