

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2017 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Paul Oatway QPM (Chairman), Cllr Allison Bucknell (Vice Chairman), Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Julian Johnson, Cllr Glenis Ansell (Substitute) and Cllr Magnus Macdonald (Substitute)

15 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Desna Allen, Rosemary Brown, Howard Greenman, Sheila Parker and Mr Philip Gill MBE JP and Miss Pam Turner.

Councillor Allen was substituted by Councillor Glenis Ansell.

16 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2017 were presented for consideration. The minutes of the review sub-committee held on 2 February 2017 were also received.

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a true and correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2017.

17 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

18 **Chairman's Announcements**

Through the Chair it was announced that Mr Paul Neale had resigned as a non-voting co-opted member of the Standards Committee, to which he had been appointed in 2009/10 as a parish council representative, as owing to ill health he was no longer able to carry out responsibilities. On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked Mr Neale for all he had done to support the Committee and wish him a full and speedy recovery and the very best for the future.

As it was the final meeting of the Committee ahead of the May 2017 local elections, the Chairman thanked all members for their contributions, as well as

the officers who had supported and would continue to support the Committee in its work.

19 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

20 **Appointment of Standards Independent Persons**

The Chairman verbally reported to the Committee that in accordance with its decision on 26 January 2017 the council had advertised for the positions of three Independent Persons, who would support the Monitoring Officer and councillors in respect of the standards complaints process.

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Miss Pam Turner, working with the Monitoring Officer, had assessed applications and prepared a shortlist of candidates for interview. Interviewing six candidates, three excellent candidates had been selected as follows:

Mrs Caroline Baynes, Mr Stuart Middleton, Mr Tony Drew.

Mrs Baynes and Mr Middleton were existing Independent Persons, with Mr Drew a new selection.

The Chairman also thanked the outgoing Independent Person Mr Colin Malcolm, who had not reapplied for a new term, for his exemplary work since July 2012 in shaping the statutory role.

It was therefore requested that the Committee endorse the recommendation to Council for the appointment of the three persons listed above.

Resolved:

To recommend that Council appoint Mr Caroline Baynes, Mr Stuart Middleton and Mr Tony Drew to the position of Independent Person.

21 **Appointment of Co-opted Members of the Standards Committee**

A report was received from the Monitoring Officer on the future appointment of non-voting co-opted members of the Standards Committee. The terms of reference for the Committee provide for the appointment of up to 8 non-voting co-opted members, 50% of whom must be serving town, parish or city councillors from within the Council's area who are not councillors or officers of the Council. For the current council term Full Council had resolved that four such members be appointed.

The Committee discussed the report, which invited them to consider whether it should continue to recommend the appointment of non-voting members, which was not a requirement, how many, and the arrangements for their appointment.

The Committee considered that the four co-opted members provided valuable input to the work of the Standards Committee, as detailed in the report, including across constitutional work and review and hearing sub-committees. They also considered that the number of co-opted members was currently correct considering the commitments and level of remuneration provided and the number of complaints received by the council.

Therefore, it was resolved:

Resolution:

To recommend that Council approve that four non-voting co-opted members be appointed, and to delegate the appointment of any non-voting co-opted members to the Standards Committee and the arrangements for selection of such members to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee.

22 **Status Report on Complaints**

A report from the Monitoring Officer was received detailing the latest position regarding complaints received, including details of those referred for investigation.

Resolved:

To note the update.

23 **Code of Conduct Training**

A report was received detailing the proposed arrangements for training on the Code of Conduct for unitary and parish councillors following the local elections in May 2017. As principal authority Wiltshire Council is responsible through its Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer for dealing with all complaints made under the respective codes of conduct for the 256 parish, town and city councils within the unitary authority area.

The Committee was in agreement that all members and co-opted members therefore need to be aware of their obligations under their respective codes of conduct, and supported the proposed approach to provide training for all unitary councillors as part of their inductions, with follow-up workshops, and regional sessions for parish councils to attend. The Committee strongly encouraged all members to attend sessions when they were held, and supported measures to provide fuller training to parish councils on their obligations to both resolve difficulties and prevent them occurring.

The Committee also discussed informal or alternate resolutions that could be used to resolve standards issues, and that this should be encouraged further in the new council.

Resolved

To endorse the proposed arrangements for training of unitary and parish councillors on the code of conduct following the elections in May 2017.

24 **Forward Plan and Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 7 June 2017, and the proposed forward plan was presented.

Resolved:

To approve the proposed forward plan.

25 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 2.35 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services,
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