

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 1 February 2012 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Davies, Ms Dean, Ms De-Lara-Bond, Mrs Falp, Kirton, Mrs Syson and Williams.

Independent representatives: Mr C Purser (Chairman); Mr C Bennett, Miss J Ratcliffe and Mr P Willers.

Parish and Town Council representatives: Councillors: Cooke, Mrs Gordon and Owen.

Officers: Mr A Jones (Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer) and Mr G Leach (Civic and Committee Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Knight and Parish/Town Council representative Councillor B Smart.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2011 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

21. LOCALISM ACT 2011

The Committee received a verbal report from the Monitoring Officer who outlined the report being taken to the Executive regarding the new standards regime.

The Localism Act 2011 made fundamental changes to the system of regulation of standards of conduct for elected Councillors. The date for implementation of these changes was 1 July 2012. The report to the Executive brought forward a series of actions the Council needed to undertake to implement the new arrangements.

RESOLVED that the following views be passed to the Executive for their consideration:

- generally the Committee were of the opinion that the new regime was very disappointing and provided bad value for the tax payer. It removed the transparency and independence of the current arrangements which could have been amended to enable greater flexibility from what was very prescriptive and because of this had

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

- cost the tax payer considerable amounts of money;
- it is imperative that the Council establishes a committee to handle complaints about the conduct of councillors;
- it is disappointing that the new regime will require the appointment of a new Independent Person who cannot be one of the current independent members and therefore the Council will lose a lot of experience and knowledge;
- The Council should appoint at least two independent people to enable holiday/sickness cover;
- the Parish & Town Councils should be consulted on any proposal from the Council prior to implementation;
- any arrangements introduced for Parish / Town Council's should form a joint committee so that they can vote on any proposals. If they do not have their opportunity to vote it will cause frustration and disillusionment with the process by not having a say in determining matters;
- the current Independent members be invited to share their knowledge and experience of the current process with the new Committee and Independent person;
- the Working Party pay due regard to the work of the LGA and NALC on drafting a model of conduct and procedures; and
- as part of this process appropriate training events for all Councils be arranged and scheduled ahead of introduction of the arrangements.

22. WORK PLAN

The Committee considered its work plan for the ensuing municipal year.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the work plan be noted;
- (2) the report on the Proposed Development Review Forum be brought to the April 2012 meeting; and
- (3) specific training be given to the members of the two Hearing Sub-Committees ahead of the meetings.

(The meeting ended at 6.52 pm)