

MINUTES OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2014

Present:

Councillor Jackson (in the Chair)

Councillors

Cain

I Coleman

Mrs Delves

Hunter

In Attendance:

Mr Ellwood, Independent Person

Mr Mozley, Independent Person

Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Regulatory Services

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governances

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 16 AUGUST 2012

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th August 2012 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3 INDEPENDENT PERSON PROTOCOL

The Committee considered the draft Protocol which set out to clarify the role of the Independent Person and provide consistency and transparency in terms of the Independent Member assisting in allegations of member misconduct, liaison with the subject member, the relationship with the Standards Committee and general matters.

Members acknowledged that the role of Independent Person was still in its infancy and as such, noted the proposal for the Protocol to be developed further.

The Committee agreed:

To adopt the Protocol for the Independent Person and to agree to keep this under review.

4 STANDARDS UPDATE REPORT

The Monitoring Officer provided Committee members with an overview of matters referred to him in relation to allegations of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, since the adoption of the Code in 2012. The view was expressed that the Council had a relatively low number of member misconduct allegations and it was noted that those allegations that had related to the Code of Conduct, had been resolved informally. The Monitoring Officer provided members with an update of a recent investigation that had also been concluded on an informal basis.

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It was reported that in terms of promotion of high standards of conduct, the Monitoring Officer had received support from the political group leaders and the Committee also acknowledged the work undertaken by officers and Independent Persons in this respect.

Members were advised that the experience of operating arrangements for standards complaints had prompted a request from the Monitoring Officer from both Blackpool Council and Fylde Council, with which the Council had reciprocal arrangements for standards matters, to review the Code of Conduct and framework surrounding it, ahead of the local elections in 2015. To that end, a joint working group was proposed to include the three Independent Persons and representatives from the Standards Committees from both authorities.

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the update report and the issues raised to date.
2. To form a joint working group with Fylde Borough Council members and the three Independent Members to review the Code of Conduct for Members and the arrangements for dealing with complaints of member misconduct.
3. That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee along with Councillor Mrs Delves be the representatives on the joint working group.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 3.25 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Tel: (01253) 477127

E-mail: lorraine.hurst@blackpool.gov.uk