
MEETING	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DATE	26 JUNE 2012
PRESENT	MRS BAINTON (INDEPENDENT MEMBER, IN THE CHAIR) MR DIXON (INDEPENDENT MEMBER) MR HALL (INDEPENDENT MEMBER) COUNCILLOR BARTON (CYC COUNCIL MEMBER) COUNCILLOR RUNCIMAN (CYC COUNCIL MEMBER) COUNCILLOR SCOTT (VICE-CHAIR, CYC COUNCIL MEMBER) COUNCILLOR TAYLOR (CYC COUNCIL MEMBER) COUNCILLOR CRAWFORD (PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER) COUNCILLOR FORSTER (PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER) COUNCILLOR MELLORS (PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER)
IN ATTENDANCE	COUNCILLOR SIMPSON (PARISH COUNCILLOR)

PART A - MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 17 May 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Standards Committee Assessment Sub-Committee meeting held on 1 June 2012 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there were no registrations to speak under the council's Public Participation Scheme.

5. JOINT COMMITTEE

[See also Part B minute]

Consideration was given to a report that asked the Committee to recommend terms of reference for the new, non-statutory Joint Standards Committee to the member Councils.

The Monitoring Officer clarified the situation in respect of Parish Councils and their representation on the Joint Standards Committee.

It was agreed that 3.1(b) of the Terms of Reference should be amended to read "One voting member of each of the three Parish Councils".

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the Councils be recommended to confirm their agreement to the establishment of the Joint Committee with the terms of reference as annexed to the report (subject to the amendment detailed above).
 - (ii) That a further report on the issue of dispensations be considered at a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

REASON: To ensure that terms of reference are in place for the new Joint Committee.

6. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

[See also Part B minute]

Members considered a report that advised them of transitional provisions contained in Regulations and which made further recommendations as to steps the Council may need to take as regards implementation.

Attention was drawn to the provision which now allowed existing independent Members to be appointed to the new role of independent person provided that the appointment was made before 1 July 2013. There remained a requirement for the position to be advertised.

The independent Members withdrew from the meeting whilst the Committee discussed interim arrangements in respect of the independent persons.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the transitional provisions be noted.
 - (ii) That the procedures for handling complaints be as annexed to the report.
 - (iii) That an appointment panel comprising Councillor Scott, Parish Councillor Crawford and the Monitoring Officer be nominated to make recommendations to Council in respect of the Independent Person role.

REASON: To ensure the effective implementation of requirements of the Localism Act taking account of transitional provisions.

7. VOTE OF THANKS

It was noted that this would be the final meeting of the Standards Committee. The Chair and the Members of the Committee who would not be serving on the new Joint Committee were thanked for their contribution to the work of the Committee.

PART B - MATTERS REFERRED TO COUNCIL

8. CODE OF CONDUCT

Consideration was given to a report that presented a draft Code of Conduct for Members' consideration. The draft Code had been prepared, as requested at the previous meeting, using the existing model as a template.

It was noted that NALC had recently produced a straightforward code which was being recommended to Parish Councils. Copies of the NALC Code were tabled for information.

Members were asked to consider a number of questions in respect of the draft code, as detailed in the report. The Committee agreed the following:

- It would be appropriate to include a definition of when a Member is “acting as such”
- A prohibition on Members scrutinising their own decisions was not a matter for the Code.
- Paragraph 3.5(d) to be amended to state only that “The disclosure is reasonable; and is in the public interest; and is made in good faith”.
- Noting that the “respect” and “disrepute” provisions had been retained, Members were content that the new filtering arrangements provided the right way to deal with this issue rather than changing the Code.
- There was a need for the non-statutory category of interests.
- Wording to be included in the Code to make provision for prejudicial interests.
- The Council should be recommended to adopt a standing order requiring members with a DPI (or a prejudicial interest) to withdraw from the room.
- There should be a requirement to register interests arising from the Council making an outside body appointment.
- Paragraph 2.2 of the draft code to be amended to read “*A co-opted member is a person who is not an elected member of the authority*”

Members also discussed whether there should be a requirement for gifts and hospitality to be registered. It was agreed that:

- Members be required to register any individual gift or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of £50 which they had received by virtue of their office.

RECOMMEND: (i) That, subject to the amendments detailed above, the draft Code of Conduct be approved and the revised copy be submitted to Council for adoption.

- (ii) That the new Code of Conduct be kept under review by the new Joint Standards Committee.

REASON: To ensure that an effective Code of Conduct for Members is in place in accordance with the requirements of Localism Act.

9. JOINT COMMITTEE

[See also Part A minute]

Consideration was given to a report that asked the Committee to recommend terms of reference for the new, non-statutory Joint Standards Committee to member Councils.

The Monitoring Officer clarified the situation in respect of Parish Councils and their representation on the Joint Standards Committee.

It was agreed that 3.1(b) of the Terms of Reference should be amended to read "One voting member of each of the three Parish Councils".

- RECOMMEND:
- (i) That Council confirm its agreement to the establishment of the Joint Committee with the terms of reference as annexed to the report (subject to the amendment detailed above).
 - (ii) That the powers to deal with dispensations be delegated to the Joint Committee.
 - (iii) That the Monitoring Officer be appointed as Proper Officer for the purpose of receiving applications for dispensation.

REASON: To ensure that terms of reference are in place for the new Joint Committee.

10. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

[See also Part A minute]

Members considered a report that advised them of transitional provisions contained in Regulations and which made further recommendations as to steps the Council may need to take as regards implementation.

Attention was drawn to the provision which now allowed existing independent Members to be appointed to the new role of independent person provided that the appointment was made before 1 July 2013. There remained a requirement for the position to be advertised.

The independent Members withdrew from the meeting whilst the Committee discussed interim arrangements in respect of the independent persons.

RECOMMEND: That, as an interim measure, the three existing independent Members carry out the Independent Person role pending the appointment of two Independent Persons at the Council meeting in October.

REASON: To ensure the effective implementation of requirements of the Localism Act taking account of transitional provisions.

Chair

The meeting started at 3.00 pm and finished at 4.25 pm.