

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 11TH JULY 2013 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors D. W. P. Booth, M. A. Bullivant, B. T. Cooper, C. M. McDonald, R. J. Shannon, M. A. Sherrey, L. J. Turner, Mr. I. A. Hodgetts (Parish Councils' Representative) and Mrs. K. May (Deputy Parish Councils' Representative - substituting for Mr. J. Cypher)

Officers: Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. S. Sellers and Ms. A. Scarce

1/13 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

2/13 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor M. A. Bullivant be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

3/13 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs. C. J. Spencer and Mr. J. Cypher (Parish Councils' Representative).

4/13 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

5/13 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 20th March 2013 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/13 **MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Monitoring Officer (MO) introduced her report, and in doing so, informed Members that during the period January to March 2013 two complaints had been received (one against two Parish Councillors and a second against a District Councillor). Both complaints had been resolved locally by the MO.

Ms. D. Jinks, Independent Person had completed her induction training and had been able to assist the MO in the two complaint matters.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

7/13 **PARISH COUNCILS' REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT**

Mr. Hodgetts reported that following the recent meeting of the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC), it had been agreed that both he and Mr. Cypher would continue as the Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee, with Mrs. May continuing as the Deputy Parish Councils' Representative.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

8/13 **LOCALISM ACT 2011 - UPDATED ARRANGEMENTS FOR HANDLING STANDARDS COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS**

The Monitoring Officer (MO) introduced a report on the Localism Act 2011 - Updated Arrangements for Handling Standards Complaints Against Members, which had been adopted by the Council on 19th June 2012.

At the Standards Committee meeting on 20th March 2013 Members had agreed to undertake a review of the process after one year of its operation. The MO explained that in advance of the review, which was scheduled to take place in October 2013, the report incorporated a small change to the working of the adopted Arrangements, which had come about as a result of their application over the last year.

The MO highlighted that the small change followed a complaint during the year which had been referred by the MO to the Police, as detailed in paragraph 3.10 of the report. The proposed amendments to the Arrangements addressed these issues in order that where a matter was referred to the Police it would be clear that the Monitoring Officer would not take any further action in relation to the matter until the Police process had been concluded.

In respect of the wider review of the Arrangements, Members were reminded that a small review group had previously been established by the Committee which included Councillor Mallett. As Councillor Mallett was no longer a member of the Standards Committee he had suggested that either Councillor Mrs. C. M. McDonald or Councillor R. J. Shannon take his place, and that Councillor Turner also be invited to form part of the review group. Following discussions and in view of the Committee's limited work programme, Members were of the view that the review should be undertaken by the Committee as a whole and that the review group was therefore no longer necessary. The MO agreed to provide Members with a presentation in respect of the review at the next meeting of the Committee in October 2013.

RESOLVED

(a) that subject to the minor change recommended to the Arrangements in relation to complaints referred to the Police, the entire of the Standards

- Committee carry out a wider review of the Arrangements in October 2013; and
- (b) that the Monitoring Officer be tasked with providing the Committee with a presentation in respect of the review at the next meeting of the Committee; and

RECOMMENDED that the Arrangements for managing standards complaints under the Localism Act 2011 (version 2) as attached to the report be adopted.

9/13 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Monitoring Officer (MO) introduced the Work Programme and in light of the decision at Minute No. 8/13 it was agreed that the Review of the operation of the Protocols on Member-Officer relations and Member-Member relations would be considered at the Standards Committee meeting to be held on 9th January 2014.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be updated to include the amendments as detailed in the preamble above.

The meeting closed at 6.17 p.m.

Chairman