

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

6.00 P.M.

11TH OCTOBER 2012

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Roger Sherlock (Chairman), Roger Mace (Vice-Chairman), Sheila Denwood, Billy Hill, Joyce Taylor and David Whitaker

Apologies for Absence

None.

Officers in attendance:-

Sarah Taylor

Monitoring Officer / Head of Governance

Peter Baines

Senior Democratic Support Officer

### 62 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

### 63 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest, although it was noted that by virtue of section 33(4) of the Localism Act 2011, the provisions of Section 31(4) of the Act (pecuniary interests in matters considered at meetings) do not apply in relation to anything done for the purpose of deciding whether to grant a dispensation.

### 64 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business authorised by the Chairman.

### 65 ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMPLAINTS OF BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT

The Head of Governance introduced a review of arrangements for dealing with allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct.

In the course of discussion, the committee took a number of decisions about future arrangements when considering a breach of the Code.

***Resolved:***

- 1) That a member be informed when a complaint is received against them, and be provided with a copy of the complaint, and invited to provide a response should the member wish to do so;
- 2) That complaints against a parish council member would not be referred to the relevant parish clerk as a matter of course;
- 3) That the Monitoring Officer be requested to issue a response of no comment to the press, in the event of enquiries at the initial stage of a complaint, and not to confirm receipt of a complaint at this stage;
- 4) That there be no right of appeal by a complainant against a decision to take no

further action at the assessment stage;

- 5) That reports to Standards Committee which summarise recent complaints be exempt from publication. It was requested that the reports should, for the Committee's information, identify the member(s) complained of and the complainant;
- 6) That the Monitoring Officer be requested to issue statements to the press only after the final hearing of a complaint, but that in other cases where the press already have information about a complaint, the Monitoring Officer liaise with the member complained of in dealing with any press inquiry;
- 7) That the complainant and the member complained of be recommended not to speak to the press about a complaint until it has been resolved;
- 8) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend the "Arrangements" document in accordance with the foregoing;
- 9) That the Assessment Criteria be approved, as appended to the report, and appended to the "Arrangements" document;
- 10) That the Investigation Procedure, Pre-Hearing Procedure, and Hearings Procedure each be approved, as appended to the report;
- 11) That the Monitoring Officer prepare a Press Protocol and revised Protocol on Publicity for Complaints of Breach of the Code of Conduct for consideration at a future meeting, based on the decisions taken at this meeting;

## 66 REVIEW OF THE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Monitoring Officer introduced Raising Concerns, a policy which had been written to replace the Whistleblowing Policy.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Hill, and seconded by Councillor Whitaker, to re-name the Raising Concerns policy as 'Have You Any Concerns?'

A vote was taken on Councillor Hill's amendment. Two Members voted in favour, four against and no abstentions. The amendment was lost.

### ***Resolved:***

That the Raising Concerns policy be approved.

## 67 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

The Monitoring Officer introduced a report about requests for dispensations under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011, which would enable councillors to participate and vote on matters relating to the setting of the council tax, and housing matters, notwithstanding any disclosable pecuniary interest. The Monitoring Officer advised that further requests had been received since preparation of the agenda.

### ***Resolved:***

- 1) That the requests for dispensations from Councillors Bevan, Brookes, Budden, Burns, Charles, Gardner, Greenall, Hall, Harrison, Jackson, Knight, Mace, Parkinson, Redfern, Rollins, Scott, D.Smith, Sowden, Sykes, Whitaker, Williamson, Barry, Coates, Mumford, I,Pattison, Sands, Sherlock and Thomas be approved as set out in the report, with the dispensations effective until the next council elections in 2015;
- 2) That the Monitoring Officer be delegated the authority to grant dispensations in similar terms on the written request of any other city councillors following the meeting;

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.45 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
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