

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

10.00 A.M.

10TH JUNE 2014

**PRESENT:** Councillors Roger Mace (Chairman), Chris Coates, Billy Hill, Margaret Pattison (substitute for Paul Gardner), Roger Sherlock and Joyce Taylor

Independent Person

Mr Tony James

Apologies for Absence

Councillors Paul Gardner and David Whitaker

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Taylor

Peter Baines

Chief Officer (Governance) / Monitoring Officer

Senior Democratic Support Officer

### 1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

***Resolved:***

That Councillor Sherlock be appointed vice-chairman for the 2014/15 municipal year.

### 2 MINUTES

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

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

There were no items of urgent business.

### 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mace declared an interest in item 6 (minute number 5) on the agenda, concerning a complaint about an alleged breach of the code of conduct, as the subject of the complaint was a member of the same political group and Councillor Mace was acting as a character witness. Councillor Mace left the room at this point.

Councillor Hill declared an interest in item 6 on the agenda, concerning a complaint about an alleged breach of the code of conduct, as he was the subject of the complaint. Councillor Hill left the room at this point, and returned for item 6 on the agenda.

### 5 ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

*Councillor Sherlock, vice-chairman, chaired the meeting from this point on, Councillor Mace having declared an interest and withdrawn from the room.*

*It was agreed to consider the hearing in public, thereby removing the exemption from publication in respect of pages 14-46 of the agenda.*

The committee considered the Investigating Officer's report into a complaint about an

alleged breach of the code of conduct by Councillor Hill (complaint 9/2013).

The complaint had been lodged by Miss Nadine Muschamp, Chief Officer (Resources), about Councillor Billy Hill, of Lancaster City Council, and related to misuse of laptops provided by the Council. The Monitoring Officer had appointed Mrs Angela Parkinson, Senior Solicitor as the Investigating Officer, and she had prepared a report which set out her findings that Councillor Hill had breached the following paragraphs of the code of conduct:

5 - you must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the council or the office of councillor into disrepute;

and

7 (b) (i) – you must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the council, act in accordance with the council's reasonable requirements.

The Investigating Officer presented her report, with Mr Chris Riley, ICT Manager, appearing in support to provide IT advice. The Investigating Officer then answered questions from members of the committee, the Independent Person, and the subject member.

Councillor Hill then addressed the committee, calling Councillor Mace as a character witness, and answered questions from the Investigating Officer, members of the committee, and the Independent Person.

The committee adjourned at 11:00am to consider its decision. The Senior Democratic Support Officer attended the committee's deliberations to record its decision, and the Monitoring Officer was present to advise and assist on matters of law and procedure and assist in the preparation of the written decision. The committee reconvened at 12:15pm to announce its decision to Councillor Hill, Councillor Mace, the Investigating Officer and Mr Riley.

***Resolved:***

***Preliminary issues***

- (1) That the hearing be held in public, with the exemption from publication lifted in respect of pages 14 – 46 of the agenda;

***Findings***

- (2) For the reasons set out in its written decision notice, the committee found that in his conduct, Councillor Hill had failed to comply with paragraph 5 and paragraph 7 (b) (i) of the code of conduct;
- (3) That the facility for Councillor Hill to have access to a council laptop be withdrawn for the remainder of his current term of office;
- (4) That the committee's findings and its disapproval of Councillor Hill's actions be reported to full Council;

- (5) That the committee recommend the leader of the Conservative Group to remove Councillor Hill from the Standards Committee and the Licensing Regulatory Committee.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 12.18 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Peter Baines, Democratic Services - telephone 01524 582074 or email  
pbaines@lancaster.gov.uk**