

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

6.10 P.M.

18TH JANUARY 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors Oscar Thynne (Chairman), Jon Barry, Nathan Burns, Colin Hartley, Peter Yates and Nigel Goodrich (substitute for Councillor Mace)

Apologies for Absence

Councillors David Whitaker and Roger Mace

Officers in attendance:-

Estelle Culligan	Chief Officer (Legal and Governance) and Monitoring Officer
Liz Bateson	Principal Democratic Support Officer

15 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 9th October and 13th December 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

16 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18 REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

The Monitoring Officer presented a report to enable the Committee to consider granting a general dispensation to all members of Council with disclosable pecuniary interests, to allow them to fully participate and vote in any decisions about Council Tax discounts on empty properties.

It had been necessary to defer consideration of the Review of Council Tax Charging Policy for Empty Homes Report at the Council meeting on 20th December 2017 when, following declarations made by a number of councillors individually and the whole Labour Group, the meeting had become inquorate.

Under Section 33 of the Localism Act the limited grounds for the granting of dispensations to Members with interests included when, 'without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited by section 31(4) from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business.'

The Committee noted that the proposal to seek this dispensation was explained at the Council meeting on 20th December 2017, and it was intended for the report to be considered by Council on 31st January 2018.

During the discussion, the Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that some local

authorities included a blanket dispensation for such matters within their Constitution. The Constitution was currently under review and the issue of dispensations would be included as part of that review.

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That the Standards Committee agrees to grant dispensations to all Councillors under Section 33 of the Localism to enable them to fully participate and vote in any decisions about Council Tax discounts on empty properties.
- (2) That the dispensations continue for a maximum of 4 years or until the Constitution be amended to include the dispensation.

19 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, in accordance with Section 110A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

20 SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Monitoring Officer presented a report, which advised the Committee about the progress of current complaints and any other code of conduct complaints received since the last report in September 2017. Members asked a number of questions including the possibility of the Standards Committee having sight of investigation reports. The Monitoring Officer advised that although the current Constitution did not allow for this it would be possible to amend the Constitution to reflect the Committee's views during the review, which was currently being undertaken.

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That, as part of the review of the Constitution, the Constitution be amended to allow the Standards Committee members sight of investigation reports.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.35 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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