

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

6.00 P.M.

21ST JANUARY 2016

PRESENT:- Councillors Colin Hartley (Chairman), Jon Barry, Charlie Edwards (Substitute for Councillor Mace), Elizabeth Scott, Roger Sherlock, David Whitaker and Peter Yates

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Roger Mace

Officers in attendance:-

Sarah Taylor
Liz Bateson

Chief Officer (Governance) and Monitoring Officer
Principal Democratic Support Officer

7 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

8 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

10 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

The Monitoring Officer presented a report to enable the Committee to consider requests from Councillors Peter and Phillippa Williamson for a dispensation.

The Committee considered that it was in the interests of persons living in the Council's area for as many members as possible to be able to participate in debate and decision making on a topic as important as the Local Plan, which would affect the whole of the Council's area. This must be balanced against the public interest in upholding the principle that members should not participate in or influence matters when it is clear that the decision directly affects their property. The Committee was mindful that the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 enabled discretion to be exercised locally as to whether a member should be permitted to participate in an item of business notwithstanding a disclosable pecuniary interest in that matter. This provided a useful and transparent mechanism for members to seek assurance that their participation would not subsequently be challenged, particularly in circumstances where it might be unclear, because of the generality and breadth of the item of business, whether a disclosable pecuniary interest would actually arise.

In all the circumstances, having considered these requests, the Committee was satisfied that it was appropriate under Section 33(2)((c) or (e) of the Localism Act 2011 to grant dispensations to Councillor Peter Williamson and Councillor Phillippa Williamson to allow them to participate in any discussion and/or vote at a meeting in respect of the Lancaster District Plan and any associated assessments, allocations or policies,

provided that any such discussion or vote did not refer directly and specifically to the land in their ownership. The Committee considered that such proviso was necessary to balance the competing public interests.

The dispensations would be granted to the date of the next City Council elections in 2019.

Resolved:

(1) That dispensations be granted to Councillor Peter Williamson and Councillor Phillippa Williamson to allow them to participate in any discussion and/or vote at a meeting in respect of the Lancaster District Plan and any associated assessments, allocations or policies, provided that any such discussion or vote does not refer directly and specifically to the land in their ownership.

(2) That the dispensations be granted to the date of the next City Council elections in 2019.

11 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That, in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items 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.

12 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

The Monitoring Officer presented a report to enable the Committee to consider the arrangements for the appointment of one or more Independent Persons. The Committee agreed to invite the applicants to meet with a Panel comprising Councillors Hartley, Mace and Scott on the morning of Monday 1st February 2016.

The Committee agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Tony James who had submitted his resignation as 'lead' Independent Person with effect from 28th February 2016.

Resolved:

(1) That the applicants be invited to meet with the Panel comprising Councillors Hartley, Mace and Scott on 1st February 2016.

(2) That a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Tony James who had submitted his resignation as 'lead' Independent Person with effect from 28th February 2016.

13 SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS

The Chairman introduced a report which contained a summary of code of conduct complaints which had been received or concluded since the previous meeting.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Liz Bateson, Democratic Services - telephone 01524 582047, or email
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