

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Thursday, 16th July, 2015

Present:- Beck (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Beaumont, Fleming, Hughes, Rowley and Swann and also Ms. A. Dowdall and Mr. P. Edler.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Finnie, Pitchley, Taylor and Bates and Saltis.

11. JACQUELINE COLLINS, MONITORING OFFICER

The Committee were sorry to hear that Jacqueline Collins, Monitoring Officer, had now left the Council, but wished her all the best for the future.

Resolved:- That the Committee's thanks and appreciation be forwarded onto Jacqueline Collins.

12. IAN DAINES, INDEPENDENT MEMBER

The Committee were sorry to hear that Ian Daines, Independent Member, had tendered his resignation from the Committee.

Resolved:- That the Committee's thanks and appreciation for all the work involved be forwarded onto Ian Daines.

13. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11TH JUNE, 2015

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th June, 2015.

Reference was made to the investigations/hearings involving Anston Parish Council and the limited powers available to the Standards Committee.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Standards Committee held on 11th June, 2015 be approved as a correct record.

14. REVIEW OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the report which outlined suggestions relating to the review of the Standards Committee's role and Terms of Reference in the light of recent reports of Alexis Jay and Louise Casey and the Government intervention in the Council.

The arrival of the Commissioners had meant that the Standards regime needed to be examined to ensure that it contributed to the improvement of the Council. The Commissioners wished to introduce improvements to ensure healthy democratic leadership and accountability and a fresher more prominent Standards Committee would contribute to the

development of this healthier culture.

Various options for improvement were suggested in the report to which the Members of the Committee could contribute.

The Committee were mindful of the limited powers within the framework and did not wish to see these diluted further and urged those involved to be more proactive and have a serious look at the standards regime to see what aspects could be strengthened to promote transparency and ethical standards.

To take this forward it was suggested that a working group be established to consider options in depth and report back to the Standards Committee in September, 2015.

Resolved:- (1) That a working group be established to advise the Standards Committee on any possible improvements that could be made to the Standards Committee.

(2) That Members put forward any ideas they have for re-vitalising the Committee.

(3) That membership of the working group consist of Councillors Beck and Hughes (Chairman and Vice-Chairman), an Opposition Member (to be confirmed), Dave Rowley (Parish Council Representative), Phil Beavers (Independent Person) and Peter Edler (Independent Member).

15. REVIEW OF THE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which confirmed the Standards Committee was responsible for establishing and monitoring the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and how this was communicated to employees.

The Policy was reviewed in June 2014, however following the findings of the Jay and Casey reports and the publication of Whistleblowing Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice by the Department for Business Innovations and Skills (BIS), it had been identified as part of the Council's Improvement process that it was appropriate for the current Whistleblowing Policy to be reviewed again.

The Committee were mindful that in the main the detail of the Policy was fine, but it was suggested that the name be changed from the Confidential Reporting Code to allow employees to be aware of the content and comfortable in reporting concerns.

Resolved:- That a revised draft Policy be prepared initially for consideration by the Working Party of the Standards Committee at its first meeting.

16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Standards Committee take place at the Town Hall, Rotherham on Thursday, 10th September, 2015, commencing at 2.00 p.m.