

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THURSDAY, 31ST MARCH, 2016

PRESENT:-

Independent Members: , Deborah Russell (Independent Member)

Parish Representatives:

Bath and North East Somerset Councillors: Sally Davis, Sarah Bevan, Geoff Ward and Brian Simmons

Officers: Maria Lucas (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Enfysh Hughes and Shaine Lewis (Principal Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

26 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Committee.

27 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Democratic Services Officer read out the emergency evacuation procedure as set out on the agenda.

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION

There were apologies from Sue Toland, therefore Councillor Sally Davis chaired the meeting. There were also apologies from Dr Cyril Davies, Tony Crouch, Veronica Packham, Dr Axel Palmer and Councillor Nigel Roberts.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Geoff Ward declared an interest in the investigation into the complaint report as he had worked with one of the parish councillors 15 years ago. This did not affect his consideration of the matter and he remained in the meeting.

30 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

31 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS (COMPLAINTS MUST GO THROUGH THE STANDARDS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE)

There were none.

32 ITEMS FROM COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTED AND ADDED MEMBERS RELATING TO THE GENERAL BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

There were none.

33 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10TH DECEMBER 2015

RESOLVED that both the public and exempt minutes of the meeting on 10th December 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair(person).

34 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, the Committee having been satisfied that the public interest would be better served by not disclosing relevant information in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public shall be excluded from the remainder of meeting business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended.

35 INVESTIGATION INTO COMPLAINT 10-15 PAULTON PARISH COUNCIL

As all the parish representatives had sent apologies, Councillor Sarah Bevan for this meeting, also sat as a parish representative.

The Chair followed the procedure where an investigating officer has been appointed. Shaine Lewis, Principal Solicitor, presented the report and outlined the complaints.

Two of the complainants were present along with the subject member of the complaint. One complainant and one subject member made a statement to the Committee and were questioned.

Following an adjournment where the officers and the subject member/complainants left the meeting to allow members of the Committee to consider their decision, it was

RESOLVED that

The Standards Committee, having read all the evidence presented in the report and at the meeting, found there were breaches in the Code of Conduct in paragraphs 4, 6, 9, 13. Whilst the Committee accepted there were breaches they were clearly inadvertent, unintentional and there was no malice aforethought in relation to the non-disclosure of interests. The Committee recommended that the complainants, subject member and clerk attend refresher training on the Code of Conduct especially in relation to the disclosure of interests. The evidence for this recommendation was on page 59 (handwritten 45) and page 61 (handwritten 47) in the investigation report in respect of the councillors and there was no evidence of any advice given by the clerk to parish councillors in respect of the disclosure of interests.

36 RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

RESOLVED that the meeting return to open session.

37 REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS

The Monitoring Officer presented this report and stated there were a large number of complaints, including several from the parish council the subject of the report on the agenda. Steps were being taken to sort out the complaints and decision notices were going to be issued shortly.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

38 WORKPLAN FOR THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that the Workplan for the Standards Committee be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.27 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services