

# **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THURSDAY, 19TH MAY, 2016**

PRESENT:-

**Independent Members:** Susan Toland (Chair), Dr Cyril Davies (Independent Member)

**Parish Representatives:** Dr Axel Palmer

**Bath and North East Somerset Councillors:** Les Kew (sub for Sally Davis), Nigel Roberts, Geoff Ward and Brian Simmons

**Officers:** Maria Lucas (Head of Legal and Democratic Services) and Enfys Hughes

#### **1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Committee.

#### **2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

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

#### **3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION**

There were apologies from Councillor Sally Davis, Councillor Les Kew was her substitute, Councillor Sarah Bevan and Veronica Packham.

#### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **5 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR - INDEMNITIES FOR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

The Monitoring Officer announced to the meeting that there was an item of urgent business, a report on Indemnities for Members and Officers. She explained that at a meeting of Standards Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 this report had been agreed and should have gone to Council previously but it had not. She had reviewed the report and made a few minor amendments which were highlighted in Appendix 1.

The Chair agreed to add this urgent item to the agenda for the meeting and members took some time to read the report.

The Monitoring Officer explained her reasoning for changing the limit to costs incurred up to £2,000 per individual issue, was to prevent any abuse of the indemnity procedure. During discussion of this issue the importance of the Council being transparent and accountable was raised. The Monitoring Officer explained that if an

indemnity were granted then a decision notice would be published, providing an auditable trail. It was agreed that subject to a small amendment to reflect this, the report be accepted.

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that they grant an indemnity to members and officers of the Council in the terms set in the appendix to the report, with the agreed amendment see below, and authorise the extension of the Council's liability under this indemnity in so far as such insurance would be financially prudent.

#### Appendix 1 - amendment

Section 6 – last sentence to read “... and the Monitoring Officer is authorised to endorse the payment of indemnity to any Member or officer up to a maximum of £50,000, such consent to be recorded in an officer decision notice, where such indemnity is not covered by insurance, and that any sums in excess of that figure must be referred to Council for approval.”

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

There were none.

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

There were none.

#### **8 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 31ST MARCH 2016 - PUBLIC AND EXEMPT**

**RESOLVED** that both the public and exempt minutes of the meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair(person).

#### **9 WORKPLAN FOR THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED** that the Workplan for the Standards Committee be noted.

#### **10 REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS**

The Monitoring Officer presented this report. The appendix in its current format was exempt and it was explained that if there was a wish for the document to be public, this could be achieved by the complaints being noted as either against a Parish Councillor or a Bath and North East Somerset Councillor without names.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted and in the future the appendix be changed to be a 'public' document.

#### **11 CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND THE ABILITY TO SPEAK ON AN ITEM - TRAINING**

The Monitoring Officer explained that this was a training item and would take the form of a quiz. Once the quiz had been undertaken then the answers would be discussed.

Following the quiz the Chair stated, and Members agreed, that it had been a very useful training exercise.

**RESOLVED** to note the information in the training session.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**