

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of **Standards Committee** held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 7 February 2014 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor J Armstrong (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Bell, J Clark, M Dixon, G Holland, E Huntington, I Jewell and M Williams (Vice-Chairman)

Town Councillor T Batson and Parish Councillor R Harrison

Mr J Dixon-Dawson – Independent Person

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Jackson and Councillor B Stephens.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 November 2013

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 November 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Protocol for Durham County Council's Independent Person - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which set out a protocol relating to the Council's Independent Person (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Litigation Manager presented the report and explained that the objective of the protocol was to establish the methods of communications and levels of decision making relevant to the role of Independent Person.

Resolved:

That the Independent Person Protocol be adopted.

5 Such other business as in the opinion of the Chairman of the Meeting is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

The Litigation Manager circulated a briefing note to the Committee which had been prepared by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. It related to the recent regional meeting of Chairs, Vice Chairs and Independent Persons on Standards Committees, which had been hosted by Newcastle City Council. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee had attended the meeting, accompanied by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. The briefing note provided an overview of the topics which had been discussed at the meeting (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chairman advised on some of the topics which had been discussed, such as the registering of interests relating to charitable organisations. The Committee agreed that any interests a Member might have relating to organisations such as the Freemasons, should be registered.

Resolved:

That the briefing note, as circulated, be noted.

6 Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information.

Resolved:

That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

7 Update on the handling of Current Complaints - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which provided an update report in respect of complaints of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Bell queried whether the NALC Code of Conduct had been adopted by all Parish and Town Councils within the County. The Litigation Manager would raise the query with the CDALC Executive Officer and respond direct to Councillor Bell.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

