



## Standards Committee

**Date**        **Wednesday 3 September 2014**  
**Time**        **9.30 am**  
**Venue**       **Committee Room 1A, County Hall, Durham**

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### Business

#### Part A

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.  
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's agreement.**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 May 2014 (Pages 1 - 2)
3. Declarations of Interest, if any
4. Such other business as in the opinion of the Chairman of the Meeting is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.
5. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information.

#### Part B

**Items during which it is considered the meeting is not likely to be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)**

6. Complaints involving Members of Peterlee Town Council - Report on Other Action by the Monitoring Officer (Pages 3 - 6)
7. Update on the handling of Current Complaints - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer (Pages 7 - 16)
8. Such other business as in the opinion of the Chairman of the Meeting is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

**Colette Longbottom**  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
26 August 2014

**To: The Members of the Standards Committee**

Councillors J Armstrong, E Bell, J Clark, M Dixon, B Graham, G Holland,  
E Huntington, I Jewell, W Stelling, B Stephens and M Williams

Parish and Town Council Representatives – Town Councillor T Batson and  
Parish Councillor R Harrison

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**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Standards Committee** held in Conference Room 4B - County Hall, Durham on **Friday 16 May 2014 at 9:30 am**

**Present:** **Councillor J Armstrong(Chairman)**

**Members of the Standards Committee:**

Councillors E Bell, J Clark, M Dixon, B Graham, G Holland, E Huntington, I Jewell and M Williams.

Town Councillor T Batson.

**Apologies:**

Mr P Jackson, Mr J Dixon Dawson, County Councillor B Stephens and Parish Councillor R Harrison

**1 Minutes of the Meeting held 7 February 2014**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 February 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 Exclusion of the Public**

**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.

**4 Update on the Handling of Current Complaints**

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).

The Chairman took the opportunity to advise the Committee of a training session which had recently been delivered to 2 local Parish Councils. The training had been

delivered following a request from the 2 Parishes and had covered topics relating to the Code of Conduct and Member/Officer relations.

Members of the Committee expressed concerns about the lack of sanctions available to them when dealing with possible breaches of the Codes of Conduct. It seemed that there continued to be a steady flow of complaints against elected Members, yet there was very little that officers or the Standards Committee could do should a breach of a Code be proven.

The Chairman reiterated the importance of training to local Councils, especially those that appeared to have recurring issues. Members were also advised that in areas where there appeared to be issues between elected Members and their staff, the County Council would promote the adoption of a Member/Officer protocol.

The Chairman advised that he would be attending the next Regional Meeting of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Standards Committees in July. The meeting was scheduled to be hosted by Northumberland County Council and the Independent Persons, Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer were also invited to attend. At the request of the Committee, the Chairman agreed to express the concerns of Members at that meeting regarding the lack of sanctions, with a view to a regional submission being made to Central Government, calling for a review of the current sanctions.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **Agenda Item 6**

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## **Agenda Item 7**

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