

Standards Committee



Date:	Thursday, 9 October 2013
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members:	Councillor David Donaldson (Chairman) Councillors Keith Beckett, David Chedd, Vivienne M Willder
Other Councillors or Independent Persons:	Mr A Mozley
Officers:	Tracy Morrison, Mark Towers, Annie Womack
Other Attendees:	

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 6 November 2012 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported under Council procedure rule 25:

4. Local Statistics – Issues Raised with the Monitoring Officer

Tracy Morrison, the council's Monitoring Officer introduced this report. Ms Morrison explained that she was responsible for making an initial assessment of complaints and deciding whether to investigate them. The new Standards framework placed an emphasis on working with individuals to bring about mutually acceptable solutions, and to work towards ensuring that perceived breaches do not re-occur. Where it appeared that there may be a breach, to refer those matters for investigation.

The report listed the nature of allegations made since the previous meeting of the Standards Committee, both for Borough and Parish Councils. Ms Morrison described to members where the complaints relating to the parishes had originated. She also said that two complaints had been received relating to the parishes which concerned governance issues; since those matters were outside of the Code of Conduct she had

been unable to proceed formally in her capacity as Monitoring Officer, but had offered advice on governance to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED:

- 1 To note the report

5. Summary of the Investigation Closure Report (Case Reference 01/13)

Ms Morrison advised members that this item was for information only, and had been submitted to report her decision on an investigation into a complaint against Councillor Sandra Pitman, where she had decided that there had not been a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

A separate summary report was to be made available to the public, and a private and confidential report would be presented to the committee.

It was RESOLVED:

- 1 To note the report

6. Exclusion of the Public

Members of the committee were invited to consider passing a resolution to exclude the public from the meeting in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, on the grounds that the business to be discussed was exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act (information relating to any individual; and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

It was RESOLVED to exclude the public.

7. Investigation Closure Report (Case Reference 01/13)

Ms Morrison advised members that a formal investigation had been instigated into a complaint made against Councillor Sandra Pitman. The investigation had been undertaken by Mr Mark Towers, Deputy Monitoring Officer and his report outlining the allegation, background, evidence gathered, other considerations, and finding was attached for members' information. As part of the process, Mr Mozley, one of the Independent Persons appointed as advisors to the committee, had acted as counsel to Ms Pitman.

Where there is a formal investigation, the Monitoring Officer must report her decision on the investigation to the Standards Committee. After considering Mr Tower's report, Ms Morrison determined to close the matter and concurs with the view of the investigatory officer that Councillor Sandra Pitman did not breach to Code of Conduct. However, it was the view of the committee that there was a need for further training on the Code of Conduct with respect to Bryning with Warton Parish Council.

Following the discussion it was RESOLVED:

1. To note the decision of the Monitoring Officer.

Fylde Borough Council copyright [2013]

You may re-use this document/publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium. You must re-use it accurately and not in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Fylde Borough Council copyright and you must give the title of the source document/publication.

Where we have identified any third party copyright material you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This document/publication was also available on our website at www.fylde.gov.uk

Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to us at the Town Hall, St Annes Road West, St Annes FY8 1LW, or to listening@fylde.gov.uk.