

Standards Committee

Minutes



Date:	Thursday, 3 April 2014
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members:	Councillor David Donaldson (Chairman) Councillors Brenda Ackers, David Chedd, Sue Fazackerley, Vivienne M Willder
Other Councillors or Independent Persons:	Mr A Mozley, Mr B Horrocks and Mr R Ellwood
Officers:	Tracy Morrison, Katharine McDonnell

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.

Councillors Chedd and Willder declared a personal interest in item 4.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 9 October 2013 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute members

There were no substitutions on this occasion.

4. Code of Conduct in relation to Town and Parish Councillors

Tracy Morrison, the Council's Monitoring Officer, advised members that Councillors who were members of another local authority, for example as town or parish Councillors, should declare a personal interest when discussing matters relating to those authorities. However when the matters discussion concerned, for example, financial matters the interest also became prejudicial.

Tracy advised that the matter of town and parish Councillors having personal and prejudicial interests was particularly pertinent when discussing matters such as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. When the matter had been discussed at Council meetings held in January 2013 and January 2014, the relevant Councillors, had been granted dispensations to allow them to participate. However, Tracy explained, that the matter also affected members discussing such matters at other meetings, and the members affected felt that their absence from such meetings would detract from the debate as they were able to provide an insight and information which could be beneficial.

She asked that members considered whether the Code of Conduct should be amended to remove membership on another local authority as a trigger for declaring a personal interest, thus enabling members to participate in matters relating to that public body in future.

After a discussion it was RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to Council an amendment to the Code of Conduct to allow members of another local authority to be excluded from provisions relating to personal interests applying in terms of membership of a public body.

5. Protocol Relating to Independent Persons

Tracy Morrison, the Council's Monitoring Officer, introduced the item. She explained that the Monitoring Officers at Fylde and Blackpool Councils, with whom there were agreed shared arrangements, together with the shared pool of Independent Persons, had developed a protocol in relation to the role of the Independent Person.

Tracy provided an overview of the protocol, stating that as the role of Independent Person was a new role under the Localism Act, the protocol was a useful tool for defining the role, the procedure and expectations of the Independent Person. Tracy highlighted the key areas of the Protocol.

Mr Mozley and Mr Ellwood, Independent Persons for Fylde and Blackpool Councils, explained they had been fully involved with the development of the Protocol and had had the benefit of workshop with other Independent Persons from other authority areas.

The Committee commented that the Protocol provided clear definition of the role and were pleased that the Independent Persons had been involved in the development of the Protocol.

It was RESOLVED:

1. To accept and adopt the Protocol for Independent Persons.

6. Local Statistics – Issues Raised with the Monitoring Officer

Tracy Morrison, the Council's Monitoring Officer introduced the report. She explained that she was responsible for making an initial assessment of complaints and deciding whether to investigate them. The 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 a number of allegations made since the previous meeting of the Standards Committee, both for Borough and Parish Councils. Tracy advised, however, that whilst all Standards related concerns were communicated to the Committee, not all would become complaints.

It was RESOLVED:

- 1 To note the report.

Fylde Borough Council copyright [2014]

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.