

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 JULY 2017

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Present:

Councillor B Ridgway Chair

Councillor S Boyle
“ G Butler
“ M Foster

Councillor A Powell
“ S Peters
“ R Welton

Also Present:

Donna Cairns - Governance Manager (Acting)

143 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Rouse and the Parish Council representatives Councillors D Ruff and D Ward.

144 Declarations of Interest

Members are requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or other interests, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

There were no interests declared at this meeting.

145 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 12 April 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

146 Review of the Joint RIPA Policy

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director of Governance and Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer which advised of a review of the joint policy and procedures document covering the Council’s activities under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

The Committee were advised that there had been no changes in the relevant legislation or Codes of Practice since the last review and therefore the amendments that were proposed were intended to ensure the Policy remained accurate and up-to-date in terms of working practices and named officers.

The Council had not used the RIPA Powers since the last review.

The Council's use of RIPA was subject to inspection by the Surveillance Commissioner. The previous inspection carried out in 2015/16 concluded that the procedures and level of awareness in place was sufficient to ensure future applications would be compliant with the Act.

The Standards Committee receives an annual report on the use of RIPA Powers, as well as the Review, and training is provided to officers on a regular basis to ensure awareness is kept up-to-date.

The Committee were advised that Rykneld Homes Ltd have no powers under RIPA, however, covert operations carried out by them as agents of the Council can be authorized in accordance with this Policy.

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee:-

- (1) Notes the update provided on the use of the Policy.
- (2) Considers and comments on the revised joint Policy and Procedure document.
- (3) Subject to any comments made, recommend the revised joint RIPA Policy and Procedure document for approval.
- (4) Recommends that the joint RIPA Policy and Procedures document be updated by the Monitoring Officer to reflect the appointment of authorised officers and Designated Persons made by the Monitoring Officer at any future time.

147 Ethical Standards Survey

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director of Governance and Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer on the possibility of repeating the Ethical Standards Survey, which was carried out in 2014.

The Ethical Standards Survey carried out in 2014 had been conducted across the District Councillors and officers and Parish and Town Councillors and Clerks with a total of 206 responses received out of 812 that were circulated.

An Action Plan was prepared on the basis of the survey results setting out steps to address the issues raised. The Action Plan was signed off as completed by the Committee in December 2015.

The Committee discussed that carrying out the survey would be a way to raise awareness of ethical standard issues as well as to target the work of the Committee in the future. However, it was recognised that carrying out the survey was a very time consuming exercise and it was suggested that the Governance Team write to the Town and Parish Clerks within the District to enquire how many of the Parish and Town Councillors had attended training on ethical standards since the last election in 2015.

The Committee would consider responses to this letter to assess whether there was a need to carry out the wider survey.

RESOLVED - That a letter be sent on behalf of the Standards Committee to the Town and Parish Clerks within the District on the matter of training on ethical standards.

148 Work Programme 2017/18

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director of Governance and Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer which advised of the Committee's Work Programme for 2017/18.

The Committee were advised that the Parliamentary Committee on Standards in Public Life had recently published its Annual Report and Forward Plan for 2017/18. In their Forward Plan they identified that they would undertake a review of Local Government Standards during 2017/18 and would be conducting a consultation exercise in early 2018. Details of this consultation would be brought to the Committee at that time for its consideration.

RESOLVED - That the Committee notes the Work Programme for 2017/18.

149 Urgent Business

Members were advised that there was no urgent business to be discussed in the public session at this meeting of the Standards Committee.
