

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

14<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**Present** – Councillors Ireton (Chairman), Mercer, Solloway and Whitaker.

**Independent Persons (non-voting):** John Boumphrey and Peter Charlesworth

**Officers** – Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) and Committee Administrator.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mason, Independent Person Roger Millin and Parish Representatives Veronicka Dancer, Michael Rooze, Richard Simpson and Robert Stead.

Start: 7pm

Finish: 7:40 pm

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**Minutes for Report**

STN.337

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report informing the Committee of a decision notice issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Ombudsman's decision followed an investigation into a complaint about the Council's handling of a planning matter. The complaint was upheld with a finding of maladministration but that this did not cause significant injustice.

In light of the Ombudsman's findings, the Development Control Manager was asked to prepare a briefing note for the Committee setting out the details of the procedure put in place to record when and if, planning conditions have been considered before advice on permitted development rights is given.

Members considered the briefing note before them, and it was

**Resolved** – That, no further action was required in relation to the matter set out in the report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman dated 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

STN.338

**LOCAL RESOLUTION**

The Solicitor to the Council submitted a report on the outcome of a standards complaint. A complaint was made that a Ribble Banks councillor had failed to comply with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct in that he participated in a debate and/or voted on a matter in which he had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest at a meeting of the Parish Council held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

The Investigating Officer's report was issued in July 2017 and the finding was that the Councillor's interest in the matter did not amount to a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest but rather an Appendix B interest which the Councillor should have declared and then not participated in the subsequent decision made by the Parish Council. The Monitoring Officer agreed with the Investigator's recommendations for local resolution.

**Resolved** – That, the outcome of the matter is noted.

STN.339

**EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

The Partnerships Officer circulated a report at the meeting which set out the duties placed on public sector bodies as defined in the Equality Act 2010. These duties also applied to parish councils and parish meetings constituted under Section 13 of the Local Government Act.

The Equality Act 2010 stated that people must not be treated unfairly because of age, disability, sex (gender), gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

Craven District Council was already delivering its commitment to equalities in a number of ways and these were highlighted in the report.

In considering the report, the Committee noted that as the equalities obligations applied to parish councils/meetings and parish representatives were not at the meeting, it was

**Resolved** – (1) That, the report is deferred to the Committee’s next meeting.

(2) That, the Monitoring Officer is asked to circulate all relevant documentation to Members of the Standards Committee.

STN.340

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE – REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report informing the Committee of a review of local government ethical standards being undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. The Committee had called for evidence on how councils are supporting good ethical standards in local government, following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 which made significant changes to the governance of local councillors’ conduct.

The consultation sought the views of stakeholders on the workings of the current ethical standards regime of local government, including codes of conduct, investigations and sanctions. The consultation began on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and will close on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

**Resolved** – (1) That, the report is noted.

(2) That, Members of this Committee are asked to submit their views to the Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer).

(3) That, the Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) is requested to circulate the consultation questions by way of a questionnaire to all Members of the Council.

(4) That, subject to (2) and (3) above, the Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) is asked to collate all the responses and that a special meeting of the Standards Committee is arranged to consider and determine the Council’s response to the consultation on the review of local government ethical standards.

STN.341

**MONITORING REPORT**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report updating Members on the Code of Conduct complaints received and the status of existing complaints since the last report to Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

**Resolved** – That, the monitoring report is noted.

**Minutes for Decision**

- None -

Chairman