

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

8th November 2017

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

Independent Person (non-voting): John Boumphrey and Roger Millin

Parish Representatives: Michael Rooze, Richard Simpson

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

Apologies for absence were received from Independent Person Peter Charlesworth and Parish Representatives Veronicka Dancer and Robert Stead.

Start: 7pm

Finish: 7:45 pm

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 5th September 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Minutes for Report

STN.333

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report presenting an updated draft revised Whistleblowing Policy. At its last meeting, the Committee had considered in details the consultation responses and suggested revisions had subsequently been incorporated into the policy. A flowchart had also been prepared setting out the order in which a concern raised by an individual would be dealt with.

Members were asked to consider the amended policy and agree the changes. During the debate a few minor modifications were suggested and, it was

Resolved – That, subject to minor amendments, the Whistleblowing Policy as now submitted is adopted.

STN.334

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN

The Solicitor to the Council submitted a report informing the Committee of a decision notice issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Standards Committee's terms of reference included receiving and dealing with reports resulting from complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and this particular complaint concerned planning advice given about the removal of a section of hedge to allow vehicular access to the highway, without considering whether this would breach an existing planning condition.

Having concluded that the Council was at fault, the Ombudsman did not, however, find that the fault caused the complainant significant injustice.

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

(2) That, in light of the Ombudsman's findings, the matter is deferred to the next meeting and the Development Control Manager is 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.

(3) That, a copy of the report is circulated to all Members

STN.335 **DCLG CONSULTATION DISQUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR MEMBERS**

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report informing the Committee of a consultation paper issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on behalf of the Secretary of State which proposed updating the criteria disqualifying individuals from becoming a councillor or directly-elected mayor.

The Government was of the view that the law should be updated and the disqualification criteria broadened to reflect new options to protect the public and address unlawful and unacceptable behaviour.

The proposals were welcomed as they would strengthen local government's ethical agenda and ensured that individuals wishing to hold elected office were of good character.

Resolved – (1) That, the contents of the report are noted.

(2) That, in consultation with the Chairman, the Solicitor to the Council is asked to prepare a response to the Department for Communities and Local Government in response to their consultation on disqualification criteria for Members.

(3) That, a copy of the response is sent to all Members of this Committee.

STN.331 **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 5th September 2017.

Resolved – That, the monitoring report is noted.

Chairman