

Present:	Councillor Geoff Ellis (in the Chair)
Councillors:	Brent Charlesworth, David Jackson, Rosanne Kirk, Hilton Spratt, Ralph Toofany
Also in Attendance:	Russell Pond (Independent Person) Chris Elkington (Reserve Independent Person)
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Chris Burke, Ronald Hills
Substitutes:	Councillor(s) Jane Clark, Patrick Vaughan

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - 23 JULY 2012

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2012 be confirmed.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

7. PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Assistant Director for Legal and Corporate Support Services:

- a. presented a report proposing changes to the operation of the Standards Committee.
- b. discussed the changes brought through the Localism Act 2011 to the operation of standards within the Council and across the country.
- c. highlighted the proposed changes to the Standards Committee's terms of reference, including a broadening in scope to encompass democratic engagement, and to encourage a more proactive approach to standards matters.
- d. outlined the proposed work programme, which had been compiled in order to provide a base from which members could establish the priorities of the revised committee.
- e. noted that the title of the Committee was recommended to be changed to the Ethics and Engagement Committee in order to reflect the shift in the Committee's business and to distinguish its new role from that of the current Standards Committee.
- f. explained that if recommended for approval to Council, the next scheduled meeting of the Standards Committee would need to be altered in order to

ensure that sufficient time was allowed for the production of an agenda following the meeting of Council on 27 November 2012.

g. invited members' questions and comments.

The Chair noted his support for the proposed changes, highlighting the proposed work programme as a starting point from which members could build to meet broader objectives.

Members:

- noted strong support for the proposals, emphasising the benefits of a Committee with a cross-cutting approach.
- welcomed the revised terms of reference, noting the need for committees which gave non-Executive members meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the Council, while also noting the additional work this would entail.
- praised the ideas which had been developed, noting particular support for the potential benefits to newly-elected members who could contribute to the Committee.
- questioned whether the potential sanctions contained within the terms of reference could be applied for a set period of time rather than indefinitely if incorporated in any decision.
- discussed the terms of reference, suggesting that, in order to ensure members of the public could understand the document, the role of the Independent Person and the terms relating to the composition of the Committee could be clarified.

The Assistant Director for Legal and Corporate Support Services responded that any sanctions could be subject to a time limit.

RESOLVED that:

1. the date of the Committee's next meeting be changed from 3 December 2012 to 12 December 2012.
2. Council be recommended to approve the revised terms of reference, including the change in the Standards Committee's title to the Ethics and Engagement Committee, subject to clarificatory alterations to the terms relating to composition.

8. GENERAL DISPENSATIONS FOR MEMBERS

The Assistant Director for Legal and Corporate Support Services:

- a. presented a report proposing the granting of a general dispensation for

members in relation to items which had previously formed part of the Council's Code of Conduct, but had been removed following the changes made by the Localism Act 2011.

- b. noted that the changes were recommended to address a perceived anomaly within the legislation.
- c. recommended that the dispensation should be granted as being in the interests of persons living in the authority's area, in order to ensure their representatives' rights to discuss and determine these matters.
- d. invited members' questions and comments.

RESOLVED that a dispensation be agreed for all members for a period of four years from 22 October 2012 in relation to the following areas of business:

- i. housing, where a member is a tenant of the authority, provided that those functions do not relate particularly to the member's tenancy or lease;
- ii. statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where a member is in receipt of, or is entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
- iii. an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
- iv. any ceremonial honour given to members; and
- v. setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.