

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

13 October 2016 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Mrs Bence, Dillon, Edwards and Tyler.

*Independent Persons* – Mr B Green, Mr M Howdle and Mr J Thompson.

246. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors; English (Chairman), Maconachie (Vice-Chairman) and Mrs Rapnik.

247. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

In view of the apologies received the Committee Manager requested the election of a Chairman for the meeting.

The Committee,

RESOLVED

That Councillor Tyler be elected Chairman for the meeting.

248. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer has advised Members of interim arrangements to follow when making declarations of interest. They have been advised that for the reasons explained below, they should make their declarations on the same basis as the former Code of Conduct using the descriptions of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Reasons

- The Council has adopted the Government's example for a new local code of conduct, but new policies and procedures relating to the new local code are yet to be considered and adopted.
- Members have not yet been trained on the provisions on the new local code of conduct.
- The definition of Pecuniary Interests is narrower than the definition of Prejudicial Interests, so by declaring a matter as a Prejudicial Interest, that will cover the requirement to declare a Pecuniary Interest in the same matter.

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Where a member declares a "Prejudicial Interest", this will, in the interests of clarity for the public, be recorded in the minutes as a Prejudicial and Pecuniary Interest.

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

249. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2016 were approved by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

- The date of the minutes on the first page was amended from 16 July 2015 to 14 July 2016
- Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Mrs Bence

250. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

Following advice from the Head of Legal & Administration the Chairman proposed a change to the order of the agenda requesting that Agenda Item 5 – Complaint Reference 3031 – Arun District Councillor Francis Oppler be moved to the last item, under exempt business. The Committee agreed to this change.

251. RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS - UPDATE

The Head of Legal & Administration provided an update on the progress made with the recruitment of two more Independent Persons to the Committee.

The Chairman asked the Committee if it could take a view on whether it felt it necessary to advertise the positions through the Local Press. In discussion, the Committee agreed that the positions should be advertised through avenues that would not attract a charge such as the Council's website, Town & Parish Councils, the Sussex Association of Local Councils and through the Voluntary Sector such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Mr Thompson was thanked for the two names that he had put forward. The Head of Legal & Administration then confirmed that she would begin the advertisement part of the recruitment process

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252. LOCAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE – UPDATE

The Head of Legal & Administration confirmed that Richard Orridge of Spencer Howard Solicitors, was progressing this work and a report would be provided to the Committee, with more detail, in the near future.

253. ASSESSMENT PANEL DECISION CONCERNING ALLEGATION AGAINST A PARISH COUNCILLOR

The Committee received and noted an information report regarding a case dealt with by the Assessment Panel relating to Councillor Paul Bicknell in his role as an Angmering Parish Councillor.

254. ASSESSMENT PANEL DECISION CONCERNING ALLEGATION AGAINST A DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

The Committee received and noted an information report regarding a case dealt with by the Assessment Panel relating to Arun District Councillor – Philippa Bower.

255. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 and Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the items.

256. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENTS OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS (Exempt – Paragraphs 1 and 5 – Information Relating to any Individual and Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings)

The Committee received and noted a report from the Head of Legal and Administration which provided Members with updated information to add

to their Register of Assessments of Complaints against Councillors. It was agreed that in future the updated information would only cover a rolling period of 12 months.

257. COMPLAINT REFERENCE 3031 – ARUN DISTRICT COUNCILLOR FRANCIS OPPLER

Following the outcome of the motion at Full Council on 20 July 2016, the Committee agreed that this report would be considered at an additional meeting of the Standards Committee on 26 October 2016.

(The meeting concluded at 6.25 pm)