

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Monday, 14th January 2013.

PRESENT: *Councillor Rehman (in the Chair), Councillors Foster, K, Hussain, S, Oldfield, Riley, Slater, Taylor, B, and Walsh. Tassadaq Hussain (Independent Member) Alan Eastwood (Independent Person)*

RESOLUTIONS

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed those present and apologies from Councillor Hirst were submitted and noted.

2. Membership of the Committee.

The Committee were updated on the appointment of members to the Committee.

RESOLVED - That the Membership of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year be noted-

Councillor Rehman, (Chair), Councillor John Slater, (Vice Chair), Councillors K. Foster, Hirst, S. Hussain, Oldfield, Riley, B Taylor and Walsh.

Independent Person-Alan Eastwood

Independent Members- Tassadaq Hussain and Paul Fletcher.

Parish Council Representatives- Councillor Trevor Maxfield (Darwen Town Council)

(Councillor Maxfield joined the Committee at the table)

3. Declarations of Interest in items on this agenda

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. Code of Conduct and the New Standards Regime.

The Committee received a presentation on the New Code of Conduct and the new Standards Regime. The Code had been submitted to the Council Forum meeting on 30th August 2012 where it had been adopted together with the establishment of this Committee. The new arrangements for dealing with member complaints had also adopted.

The Localism Act 2011 had made fundamental changes to the system of regulation of Standards of Conduct for elected members and co-opted members of the Council. The Council had been required to put new arrangements in place and adopt a new Code of Conduct. The Act imposes a

duty on the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for its members and co-opted members. The Council also had a duty to introduce a system to handle complaints and appoint at least one Independent Person to advise on complaints.

Resolved- That the New Code of Conduct and Standards Regime adopted by the Council at its meeting on 30th August 2012 be noted.

5. Adoption of the Code of Conduct by Parish Councils.

The Committee were up dated on the adoption of the Code of Conduct by Parish/Town Councils in the Borough. Under the Localism Act, Parish/Town Councils in the area were required to adopt a code of conduct and inform the Monitoring Officer. The Code adopted did not have to be the same as that adopted by the principal local authority but had to reflect the Nolan Principles.

The Committee were informed that of the seven Parish/Town Councils in the area five (Darwen, Livesey, Yate & Pickup Bank and Tockholes) had adopted this Councils code and North Turton Parish Council had adopted a code from the Association of Parish Councils. Eccleshill Parish Council have yet to confirm.

Resolved- That the adoption of Codes of Conduct by the Parish/Town Councils in the borough be noted.

6. Training of Members.

The Committee received an update on the training that had taken place relating to the introduction of the new code of conduct for both members of the Council and the Parish/Town Councils. The Committee were informed that training was to be given on an annual basis and that this would also form part of the induction process for new members of the Council. Members were reminded that the declarations forms would need to be completed on an annual basis.

Members discussed the nature of training and the option that as with other training the Council ran on specific Committee responsibilities such as Planning Committee, Standards and code of conduct training should be compulsory.

Resolved- That the arrangements for training of members of the Council Parish Council and Town Council on an annual basis be developed and that this training should be mandatory in the opinion of this Committee.

7. Web Site Development

The Committee considered the development of the Standards/code of conduct Website and received an outline of the possible contents. This would include-

- What and who the Standards Committee were
- The new code of conduct and the law relating to standards
- Parish Councils town Councils and the code
- The role of the monitoring officer, independent officer and independent members
- What will happen of the code is broken
- How complaints can be made
- What will happen with complaints?

The Committee were informed that the site would also include complaints forms and also declaration of interest forms. Members were informed that the web pages would be up and running before the next meeting of the committee and members could feedback their views to that meeting on how further developments could be incorporated.

Resolved -That the development of the web page for the Standards Committee be noted and that member’s feedback be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

8. Requests for Dispensation, Finance Council.

The Committee considered the issues of dispensations for members attending the Finance Council. The Committee considered the level of relationships that they considered declarable and the effect this could have on the makeup of the Council Meeting.

- Resolved-**
1. That the level of interest be set as follows-
Parents, children, siblings and spouse.
 2. That members be requested to indicate in advance of the Finance Council Meeting any interests that they may need to declare at that meeting so that the position on dispensations can be considered;
 3. Should it be necessary a further meeting of this Committee be convened to consider requests for dispensations necessary to maintain the political balance of the Council.

Chair of the Committee.....
Date.....