

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

18 FEBRUARY 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Monday, 18 February 2013

PRESENT: Mrs P.S. Jones (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Chris Bretherton-Watt, Jonathan Duggan-Keen, and Merfyn Roberts
Councillors: David Cox, Hilary McGuill and Arnold Woolley

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor P.G. Heesom

IN ATTENDANCE: Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Democracy and Governance Manager, and Committee Officer

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillors H.J. McGuill and A. Woolley declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to the three applications for dispensation to be considered at the meeting concerning Buckley Health Centre.

41. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

Matters arising

The Democracy and Governance Manager referred to the proposed database of previous dispensations and advised that a progress report would be provided for the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

42. APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided an update on the progress for recruitment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee. He explained that in response to a recent advertisement seven applicants had been shortlisted and a date for interviews was arranged. However, due to the illness of the lay member on the Appointments Panel the interviews had to be postponed and a new date was to be scheduled in conjunction with the Chair, Vice Chair and lay member. He anticipated that the interviews would be held in March and the appointments ratified at the meeting of the County Council to be held on 16 April 2013.

During discussion the Head of Legal and Democratic Services responded to the queries raised by Councillor McGuill concerning the appointment and role of lay members on the Appointments Panel.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

43. ANNUAL ALL WALES STANDARDS CONFERENCE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced a report to inform members of the proposed content for the All Wales Standards Conference to be held on 19 April 2013 and to request nominations to fill the places allocated to Flintshire County Council.

The Head of Service provided background information and advised that the Council had five places allocated to it. He suggested that, as in previous years, any surplus places could be offered to Town and Community Councils.

The Committee were invited to submit nominations. Councillor H.J. McGuill, Councillor A. Woolley, and Mrs P. Jones put their names forward to attend the Conference. The Head of Service explained that a booking form would be sent to them to enable them to express their preference for the workshops they wished to participate in.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Councillor H.J. McGuill, Councillor A. Woolley, and Mrs P.S. Jones attend the All Wales Standard Conference to be held on 19 April 2013; and
- (b) That surplus places be offered to Town and Community Councils within Flintshire and in the event of there being more volunteers than places lots would be drawn for who would attend.

44. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the Forward Work Programme and invited members to put forward items for future consideration. He commented on the wider issues for deliberation in the future and cited the need for the establishment of a national model for the local resolution of complaints as an example.

Members reviewed the current programme and agreed that the following items be considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 4 March 2013:

- Protocol for use of resources
- A rolling programme for reviewing the codes and protocols

- Preparation of the Annual Report
- Database of dispensations

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be agreed

45. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it is considered to contain exempt information by virtue of paragraphs 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

46. RESIGNATION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services referred to a letter of resignation which had been received from a member of the Committee.

Mr. M. Roberts proposed that a letter of thanks be sent by the Chair on behalf of the Committee to the member for his hard work and support. It was also agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to those members of the Committee who were retiring.

RESOLVED:

That a letter of thanks be sent by the Chair on behalf of the Committee to the member who had resigned for his hard work and support.

47. DISPENSATIONS

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that applications for dispensation had been received from Councillors N. Phillips, H.D. Hutchinson and R.G. Hampson. As these related to an application going to the Planning and Development Control Committee meeting on 20 February 2013, the Chair had added them to the printed agenda.

Councillors H.J. McGuill and A. Woolley withdrew from the meeting at this point.

The Democracy and Governance Manager provided background information and context. He explained that the requests for dispensation were to enable the above three Members to speak and vote on the planning application for Buckley Health Centre which was to be considered at the meeting of the Planning and Development Control Committee to be held on 20 February 2013.

During discussion differing views were expressed in favour of allowing the Members to speak and vote on the application and in favour of speaking only and not voting. In response to the comments and observations made by members the Democracy and Governance Manager advised that the Members should be able to speak but not vote on the item.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services gave an overview of the circumstances when a Standards Committee may grant dispensations and advised on the specific grounds which were relevant to the requests being considered. He responded to the queries raised and provided further advice to assist the Committee in its decision making process.

The Committee considered the applications together with the additional advice provided at the meeting. Mr. M. Roberts proposed that Councillors N. Phillips, H.D. Hutchinson and R.G. Hampson be allowed to speak but not to vote on the planning application for Buckley Health Centre at the meeting of the Planning and Development Control Committee to be held on 20 February 2013. The proposal was seconded and when put to the vote became the resolution of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors N. Phillips, H.D. Hutchinson and R.G. Hampson be allowed to speak but not to vote on the planning application for Buckley Health Centre at the meeting of the Planning and Development Control Committee to be held on 20 February 2013.

48. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the public or the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 6.40 pm and ended at 7.25 pm)

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Chairman