

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
9 MAY 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee of the Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold, on Monday, 9 May 2016.

PRESENT: Edward Hughes (Chair)

Councillors: Hilary McGuill and Arnold Woolley

Co-opted Members: Robert Dewey, Jonathan Duggan-Keen, and Phillipa Earlam

APOLOGIES: Ken Molyneux

IN ATTENDANCE:

Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer, and Committee Officer

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (including whipping declarations)

None were received.

55. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2016 were submitted.

Planning Protocol

The Deputy Monitoring Officer referred to point 5 of the resolution on page 6 and advised that at the meeting of the Planning Strategy Group held on 21 April 2016 it had been resolved to accept the recommendations of the Standards Committee except that Planning Strategy Group considered that a Member who had submitted an application should not attend the site visit and this would be referenced in the consultations response to the Welsh Minister.

RESOLVED:

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

56. DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications for dispensation.

57. MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

The Monitoring Officer introduced a report to provide details of the responses to a survey which was undertaken by Members on Member communications. He provided background information and reported on the responses to the survey as detailed in the report.

The Monitoring Officer explained that there had been little interest by Members in the production of Annual Reports which were to be written by the councillors but published by the Council on its website. However, from the survey it was clear that Members themselves regularly communicated with their residents through newsletters and the like. However, the facility to publish annual reports still existed and it was therefore recommended that the Authority contact Members annually during May, with a template annual report, to remind them that annual reports could be placed on the Council's website for publication if they wished.

In response to a question from Robert Dewey concerning editorial control the Monitoring Officer explained that Members' Annual Reports were not allowed to be political or defamatory, but that in all other respects officers would not exercise any editorial control over the content of annual reports.

Councillor Arnold Woolley expressed disappointment at the low number of Members who had taken the opportunity to respond to the survey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the responses to the survey be noted; and
- (b) That Members be contacted in May each year with a template annual report and be advised that any completed annual reports could be placed on the Council's website by Democratic Services.

58. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Monitoring Officer presented the current Forward Work Programme. He provided an update on the Standards Forum and advised that Anglesey Council had offered to host the first meeting, however, the meeting scheduled to be held in June 2016 had been postponed to July 2016. The Monitoring Officer explained that a revised date had yet to be confirmed but suggested that the Committee could put forward any items for consideration at the Standards Forum at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 6 June 2016.

During discussion Councillors Hilary McGuill and Arnold Woolley referred to the need for all Members (including Town and Community Councillors) to have full knowledge and understanding of the standards set out in the Code of Conduct which they were expected to adhere to. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that following election all councillors were asked to sign an acceptance of office which included an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Robert Dewey expressed concerns around the behaviour of some councillors and said there was a need for training to be provided to enforce the standards required by the Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer agreed to follow-up the matters raised by members concerning the signing of

the Code of Conduct and the suggestion of training to remind councillors of their responsibilities in respect of the Code of Conduct.

During discussion the Monitoring Officer advised that he was still awaiting the Annual Report from the Ombudsman.

Councillor Arnold Woolley referred to the recent survey undertaken to determine Members preferences for when formal meetings should be held and the recommendation to continue the practice of holding a four week recess during the month of August for the life of this Council. He proposed that the Forward Work Programme be amended so that the items which were scheduled for consideration in August 2016 be moved forward to the next meeting of the Committee. This was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted; and
- (b) That the Forward Work Programme be amended so that the items which were scheduled for consideration in August 2016 be moved forward to the next meeting of the Committee.

59. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

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

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and ended at 6.30pm.

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Chairman