

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Standards Committee Wednesday, 7 February 2018 The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors P. Lloyd Jones (Chair), M. Bradshaw, C. Loftus, J. Lowe, McDermott, Wainwright, Wharton and Mr A. Luxton (Co-optee), Professor D Norman (Independent Person), Mr R Radley (Independent Person)

Apologies for Absence: Mrs A. Morris (Co-optee) and Mrs D.Howard (Independent Person)

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney and A. Scott

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

		<i>Action</i>
STC1	MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2017, having been circulated, were signed as a correct record.	
STC2	STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT The Committee considered a report of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer, which summarised the work of the Committee in the last Municipal Year. At the meeting in February 2017, Members had considered the Annual Report, which summarised the work of the Committee. There had been an update on issues that had arisen in other parts of the country, which provided an insight into the nature of matters raised and how they were dealt with elsewhere. A verbal update was given on local matters which had been considered since the previous meeting. RESOLVED: That the report be noted and referred to Council for information.	Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer

STC3 STANDARDS COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT

The Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer provided the Committee with an update on issues which had arisen in other parts of the country, which provided an insight into the kind of issues faced and the manner in which they had proceeded.

Details on recent cases were given from the following locations:-

- Sandwell (Birmingham);
- Honiton (Devon);
- Derby City;
- Conwy;
- Bath and North East Somerset;
- East Riding of Yorkshire;
- Cumbria;
- Bolton; and
- St Helens

A verbal update was given on two local matters that had been considered since the last meeting.

In discussion during the meeting, Members considered the use of social media by Parish Councillors and Elected Members, as well as the distribution of election and campaign material to households that displayed the 'No Canvassers' (or similar) signs. It was considered that training in the use of social media could be offered, and in any event, it was recommended that such advice should form a part of the Induction Training for new Members.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

STC4 ADVICE SOUGHT ON DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Professor David Norman (Independent Person), sought the advice of the Committee regarding the circumstances of a declaration by a Council-appointed Trustee.

The Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/ Monitoring Officer responded to the request, and offered appropriate advice.

Following some general debate on the matter, it was agreed that refresher training on the Council's Code of Conduct for Members could be arranged, and further, that

such a training session could also incorporate advice on the use of Social Media, Data Protection and Freedom of Information guidance.

RESOLVED: That the guidance provided be noted and the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/ Monitoring Officer be asked to organise refresher training on the Members Code of Conduct, as appropriate.

Operational
Director, Legal and
Democratic
Services/Monitoring
Officer

Meeting ended at 2.54 p.m.