

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS PANEL - 13 JUNE 2016

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 19 JULY 2016

(To be read in conjunction with the Agenda for the Meeting)

**Present**

Cllr Michael Goodridge (Chairman)  
Cllr Mike Band  
Cllr Carole Cockburn  
Cllr Stephen Hill

Cllr Sam Pritchard  
Cllr Jeanette Stennett  
Cllr John Williamson

**Town and Parish Representatives**

Councillors Joan Holroyd and Richard Jameson

**Apologies**

Cllr Kevin Deanus and Cllr David Else

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN (Agenda item 1.)

Councillor Michael Goodridge was confirmed as Chairman of the Standards Panel for the Council Year 2016/17.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda item 2.)

There were apologies received from Councillors Kevin Deanus and David Else.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3.)

There were no disclosures of interest.

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL**

Background Papers

Unless specified under an individual item, there are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to the reports in Part I of these minutes.

4. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS TO THE MONITORING OFFICER (Agenda item 6.)

The Panel received an update on complaints received by the Monitoring Officer since it had last met in January 2015. The report also asked the Panel to consider whether to recommend to the Council that the Code should be reviewed since it was last updated in July 2013.

The Panel was advised that since it had last met, the Monitoring Officer had dealt with two complaints about Parish Councillors and in five further cases involving Parish Councillors a more detailed initial investigation had been carried out. The Councillors who were the subject of the complaint were interviewed and the views of the Independent Persons sought on the action proposed in accordance with the Council's processes.

The Panel was advised that a further two cases received since it had last met had involved both Parish/Town Councillors and Waverley Councillors and had related to planning matters. Two further cases had involved a planning matter. In these four cases the advice of one of the Council's Independent Persons had been sought. In two cases the Monitoring Officer had spoken to the Councillors involved. Both related to a potential conflict of interest with the Councillors business activities. In one case the Monitoring Officer had advised the Member to amplify their Register of Interests and in another administrative arrangements had been implemented to overcome any suggestion of a conflict of interest. In one case the Independent Person had agreed that the Code did not cover the subject of the complaint. One other case raised by two complainants related to a number of Councillors and one of the Independent Persons was currently considering this.

The Monitoring Officer advised that there was a common pattern to the complaints, with main themes being interests, respect for others, predetermination or the process, and this was particularly relevant for planning. Members needed to ensure that their interests were complete and open and this would be reiterated at refresher training.

The Panel noted that the Members' Code of Conduct was last reviewed in July 2013 and it was suggested that it was appropriate to review again in light of examples that had come forward and advice that had been given. Members agreed that they should recommend to Council that a review of the Code should be undertaken to also include the planning code of good practice and the investigation arrangements.

The Panel agreed that the review of the Code should also consider a provision to define those interests which were not disclosable pecuniary interests or non-pecuniary interests, but which required Members to declare and possibly exclude themselves from a matter where the public perception could consider that the interest was so significant that a member could be prejudiced because this was becoming a common matter for councillors to consider.

It was suggested that the Independent Persons should also be involved in this process and to offer their views on any changes, and also invited to attend the meeting of the Panel that would be considering the review.

The Panel noted that Robin Pellow, current Monitoring Officer, was due to retire on 30 June 2016 and the role would be taken on by Robin Taylor, Head of Policy and Governance, from 1 July 2016. Robin Taylor agreed to send a letter to all Town and Parish Council Clerks to introduce himself and offer them the option of training at their individual Councils. The Panel wished Robin Pellow well for a long and healthy retirement, and thanked him for his help and advice over his years at Waverley.

The Standards Committee RESOLVED that refresher training sessions be arranged for Borough Councillors for which Town and Parish Councillors would be invited. And,

**RECOMMENDS that**

- 1. A review be carried out by the Committee of the Members Code of Conduct, Planning Code of Good Practice and arrangements for investigations.**

**PART II - MATTERS OF REPORT**

The background papers relating to the following items are as set out in the reports included in the original agenda papers.

5. TO INTRODUCE THE NEW TOWN AND PARISH REPRESENTATIVES TO THE STANDARDS PANEL (Agenda item 5.)

The two new Town and Parish representatives were introduced to the Panel; Councillors Joan Holroyd from Elstead Parish Council and Richard Jameson from Bramley Parish Council.

**The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 5.57 pm**

**Chairman**