

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Thursday, 27 October 2016

Attendance list at the end of the document

The meeting started at 10.00am and ended at 10.55am

- *8 Public speaking
There were no questions asked.
- *9 Minutes
The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 19 July 2016, were confirmed and signed as a true record.
- *10 Declarations of interest
There were none.
- *11 Review of Members' Code of Conduct
Members considered the review of the Members' Code of Conduct. Councillor Susie Bond again raised the issue of the list of gifts and hospitalities on the Council's website. Henry Gordon Lennox, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Lead - Legal, Licensing & Democratic Services advised that it was the Democratic Services Officers who updated the list as and when they received any new information from Councillors. He would send an email to all Councillors reminding them of the need to advise receipt of any gifts and hospitalities over £25.

Jessica Bailey, Co-opted Independent member, asked whether EDDC's approach to the declaration of Personal Interests had been in compared with that of other local authorities, particularly South Somerset District Council. Members accepted that it was good practice to carry out a benchmarking exercise with other comparable local authorities every 4 years.

The Chairman thanked the Monitoring Officer for his report.

RESOLVED: that it be agreed that the Members' Code of Conduct (found at Part 5.1 of the Council's Constitution) is fit for purpose and there is no need to make any amendments, subject to a review of the policy on declarations of Personal Interest in line with that of South Somerset District Council for the Annual Council meeting in May 2017 .

- *12 Assessment of the naming of complainants and subject members in the complaint process and compliant reporting
The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer the purpose of which was to inform the Committee on the process for naming, or not, complainant and subject members as part of the complaints process.

Councillor Douglas Hull raised his concerns that one person could make continuous complaints about other without being named. However, there was concern

expressed that the naming of complainants could put off some complainants who had a genuine complaint.

Henry Gordon Lennox, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Lead - Legal, Licensing & Democratic Services advised that it was the subject member's choice whether they were named or not. The process now was that a subject member could ask for a decision notice to be published and it was understood that this was made clear in the letter to subject members and if not then this would be added to future letters.

Members requested that a report the report prepared ts made against a subject member by other Councillors and the public should include a section detailing the outcomes where one complainant makes amore than one complaint and also identifying where individual Councillors have more than one complaint made against them.

The Chairman thanked the Monitoring Officer for his report.

RESOLVED:

1. that it be agreed that the current process for dealing with the naming of complainants and subject members was satisfactory;
2. that the complaint update report includes the outcomes for complaints made by a specific complainant where they make more than 2 complaints and also that the number of complaints against each councillor should also be recorded .

***13** Complaint update

The Committee considered and noted the report of the Monitoring Officer, which provided an update for the Committee on new Code related cases received since 1 May 2016.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted;

***14** Forward Plan

The Committee noted the contents of the forward plan and future meeting dates. It was noted that Development Management Committee members would have training on lobbying and declaration of gifts and hospitality. In addition, the Councils policy on Social Media would be circulated to all members of the Committee for their information.

Henry Gordon Lennox, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Lead - Legal, Licensing & Democratic Services advised that unless there was more business that the Committee arranged for 24 January 2017 maybe cancelled.

The following items would be included for consideration at the next meeting:

- Forward Plan.

Attendance list

Present:

Councillors:

Stuart Hughes (Chairman)

Douglas Hull

Dawn Manley
Pauline Stott

Co-opted non-voting members:

Martin Goscomb, Co-opted Independent member
Jessica Bailey, Co-opted Independent member
Tim Swarbrick, Co-opted Independent member

Also present:

Alison Willan, Independent Person

Councillors:

Susie Bond – substitute Committee member
Alan Dent – substitute Committee member

Officers:

Henry Gordon Lennox, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Lead - Legal, Licensing & Democratic Services
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor
Chris Lane, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Graham Godbeer
Frances Newth, Co-opted Parish/Town Council member

Chairman Date