

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held at Blackdown House, Honiton on 16 April 2019

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.50 am

15 Public speaking

There were no questions asked.

16 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 22 January 2019, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

17 Declarations of interest

There were none.

18 Code of Conduct Complaint Form

Members noted that at its meeting on 22 January 2019, the Committee discussed the benefit of using a standardised form for the making of complaints that councillors had breached the code of conduct. It was agreed that this was a sensible way to proceed. The Committee had requested that the complaint form was brought back for review and agreement prior to being used.

A copy of the proposed form was attached to the report and it also highlighted where to find EDDC's code and also explained that town/parish councils may have their own version. It required complainants to identify the relevant sections of the code which had been breached and to identify the relevant sections of the code which had been breached. And to identify how a councillor was acting in an official capacity.

The complaint form would sit on the councillor conduct page of the website and complaints would not be progressed unless a completed form was provided. Members discussed the complaint form and made several changes to the points raised in Section 4 - Details of Complaint, including removal of the words "that he" in point one, adding reference to use of social media and written word in point two and adding the words "24 hours to the date of the alleged incident" in point 3. When discussing Section 5 – Remedy they wished to add "to set out what the remedies were in the box".

RESOLVED that the complaint form be used following the May elections.

19 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 2018. Members went through in detail the cases raised in 2019. Anita Williams, Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that there was an additional case 2019-CO8 which was an

allegation of poor conduct at a Town Council Planning meeting from an individual councillor. She reported that more information was trying to be found on this case.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

20 **Monitoring officer to update Committee on Standards training planned for post May 2019 election. Verbal Report**

Members received the verbal report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer on Standards training planned for post May 2019 elections. It was noted that it was the intention to offer planning training for new/existing town/parish councils. District Councillors would receive a welcome pack of information. Any district councillor who wished to sit on a committee must have code of conduct training. There would also be two welcome evenings for district councillors and a mop up session for those not able to attend one of these evenings.

Councillor Andrew Moulding, Chairman, reported that he had attended the annual meeting of town/parish clerks and found it very useful and informative.

21 **Forward Plan**

The Committee noted the contents of the Forward Plan and future meeting dates. Members wished to add the following items to the Forward Plan for consideration at a future meeting:

- Experiences of Standards training from town/parish councils.
- Gifts & Hospitality Register.
- Progress update on the new complaints form.
- Progress update from EDDC councillors training.

Members discussed the problem of finding enough people to stand as town/parish councillors and expressed their concern that many of these councils could not find enough residents to stand as councillors, leaving vacancies unfilled.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

A Moulding (Chairman)
S Bond

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

None

Also Present:

Martin Goscomb. Co-opted Independent member
Frances Newth, Co-opted Parish/Town Council member
Tim Swarbrick, Co-opted Independent member

Also present:

Alison Willan, Independent Person

Officers in attendance:

Christopher Lane, Democratic Services Officer
Anita Williams, Deputy Monitoring Officer

Councillor apologies:

G Godbeer
D Hull

Chairman

Date: