

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on 3rd October 2013 at Pippbrook, Dorking from 7.00pm to 7.20pm

Present: Councillors Dave Howarth (Chairman), Tessa Hurworth, Simon Ling (substitute for Kathryn Westwood) and John Northcott

Parish Council Representatives: Mr Roger Hammond and Mr Stuart McLachlan

5. Chairman

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman took the Chair.

6. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st May 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Emile Aboud, Kathryn Westwood and Charles Yarwood.

8. Mole Valley District Council Member Code of Conduct and Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011

The Committee considered a report set out on pages 4 to 18 of the agenda which set out the Mole Valley District Council Member Code of Conduct and Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011.

The Committee was asked to consider if it wished to undertake a further review of the Code of Conduct and Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations with a view to a report back to the Committee on 16th January 2014, with any subsequent recommendations being reported to Council on 18th February 2014.

Members noted that the new Member Code of Conduct and Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations had been introduced with effect from 1st July 2012 as a result of the Localism Act 2011. The Code stated that it would be reviewed initially one year after adoption, and thereafter at a period to be determined by the Council. The first review was actually undertaken during the autumn of 2012 and the Council, at its meeting on 30th January 2013, then approved the revised Members' Code of Conduct and Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011.

The Committee considered that a full review was not required at present and that further time was required to gauge whether the arrangements were working satisfactorily, but further consideration would be given as to whether a review was necessary in 12 months' time. It was agreed that the "Informal resolution sought" section on the flow chart attached to the Arrangements be deleted as it was considered unnecessary.

The Monitoring Officer undertook to write to the Parish Clerks reminding them of the revised Code which came into effect in January 2013.

RESOLVED: (1) That a full review be not carried out at this time but that further consideration be given in 12 months as to whether a review is necessary at that time.

(2) That the “Informal resolution sought “section on the flow chart attached to the Arrangements be deleted.

9. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: That members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that:

(i) involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act; namely

1. information relating to any individual
2. information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual; and

(ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

10. Mole Valley District Council arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Council’s Members’ Code of Conduct or of breaches of Parish Councils’ Codes of Conduct

The Committee considered the details of all complaints received concerning Members conduct of the District and Parish Councils whether or not a breach had been found.

RESOLVED: That the details of all complaints received concerning Member conduct be noted.