



Committee and Date

Standards Sub-Committee

14 November 2016

**MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2015
9.30 - 10.00 AM**

Responsible Officer: Sarah Townsend
Email: sarah.townsend@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257721

Present

Councillors David Evans, Chris Mellings and Kevin Turley

13 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED:

That David Evans be appointed Chairman of the Standards Sub-Committee for the duration of the meeting.

14 Apologies for Absence

None received.

15 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members of the Committee were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

16 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Standards Sub-Committee held on 30th July 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17 Applications for Dispensation

Members of the Committee were informed that this item had been withdrawn.

18 Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 and paragraph 10.4(1) of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following item.

19 Code of Conduct Complaint

Members considered the report of the Monitoring Officer regarding the outcome of an investigation into allegations that Councillor Barrow had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

They had regard to the acceptance by Councillor Barrow of the findings that he had offended against the principles of Integrity, Honesty and Leadership set out in the Council's Code of Conduct and to his proposed apology which had been agreed with the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person in the following terms:

"Councillor Keith Barrow apologises to the Council for failing to formally declare a conflict of interest when making a decision at ip&e Ltd.

An investigation into an allegation about the conduct of Councillor Keith Barrow has concluded that he failed to comply with the Code of Conduct of Shropshire Council by failing to formally disclose a conflict of interest at meetings of the Board of ip&e Ltd.

Councillor Barrow apologises to the Council for failing to disclose at those Board meetings his personal and business relationship with a director of the company eventually appointed as accountants and auditors of ip&e Ltd. Councillor Barrow accepts with hindsight that he should have formally disclosed the nature and extent of his interest at the meetings and confirms that he will attend training to make sure he is fully aware of his responsibilities on such matters under the Council's Code of Conduct and to ensure such oversight is avoided in the future.

Councillor Barrow would also like to add that he has resigned from his position as Director of ip&e Ltd in order to prevent any future risk of such conflicts of interests arising and because it is the right time for the appointment of a Chairman independent of the Council".

They noted also that the complainant considered the proposed apology to be an acceptable outcome.

Members expressed concern regarding the seriousness of the matters which were highlighted during the investigation. They considered that Councillor Barrow ought to have been aware of the need to disclose his interests in all matters whilst conducting the business of the authority.

In accordance with the Council's procedure for the resolution of findings of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, Members of the Sub-Committee were satisfied

that the proposed apology and commitment of Councillor Barrow to undertake training represented a reasonable outcome without the need to hold a formal hearing.

Members considered also that the public interest in maintaining the exemption of the report from public inspection was no longer greater than the public interest in publishing the report. This was considered to be of great importance in order to reassure the public that the matter had been the subject of a detailed and thorough investigation and that the process was open and transparent.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed apology from Councillor Barrow represented a reasonable outcome to the findings that he failed to comply with the Code of Conduct by failing to formally declare his relationship with DRE & Co when they were appointed as auditors to ip&e.

- (b) That the exempt papers be released into the public domain.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: