

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 4TH APRIL 2013

3.00 PM – 3.55 PM

Responsible Officer: Shelley Davies
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Present:

Mr M Bennett, Mr V Hunt and Mr S West.

Officers Present:

Graham White (Solicitor) and Shelley Davies (Committee Officer)

1.0 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

1.1 RESOLVED:

That Mr M Bennett be appointed Chairman of the Standards Sub-Committee for the duration of the meeting.

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 None received.

3.0 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

3.1 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.

4.0 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

4.1 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 agenda item

5.0 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT

5.1 Consideration was given to an exempt report of the Monitoring Officer in relation to an allegation that a Shropshire Councillor had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct of Shropshire Council.

5.2 The Solicitor presented the report to the Sub-Committee providing information in relation to the complaint and outlined the options available to the Sub-Committee.

5.3 The Sub Committee Members had regard to the representations made by the Councillor in response to the allegation and did not consider that any evidence had been provided to suggest that the Councillor had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct of Shropshire Council.

5.4 RESOLVED:

The Standards Sub-Committee did not consider that it would be in the public interest to carry out any further investigation of the matter as it would be unlikely to conclude that there had been a failure to comply with the code of conduct in respect of the allegation.

REASONS:

With regard to the allegation that the Councillor provided false and misleading information to the Council’s Cabinet and the Press, members considered that the information was taken from an officer report which the Councillor presented to the Cabinet. Members are entitled to rely on the professional advice provided by their officers and will present officer reports at meetings of the Authority.

Members considered that the complainant had acknowledged that the information requested had already been provided in the report prepared by the officer. Additionally, members did not consider that the minutes of the ICT Governance Board suggested that there had been any improper use by the Councillor of his position.

Regarding the allegation that the Councillor failed to respond to requests from the complainant and instead passed the message to officers to deal with, members noted that despite at the time being on a family holiday abroad, the Councillor referred the complainant’s e-mail to officers. Members considered this to be an appropriate response to the enquiry.

The Sub Committee considered that there was insufficient evidence to suggest that any investigation might conclude that there had been a failure to comply with the code of conduct.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:.....