

Standards Committee

Date: Wednesday 19 March 2014
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Membership

Mr A Byrne
Mr T Garrod
Mr P Hacon
Mr B Hannah

Mr M Kiddle-Morris
Mr I Monson (Chairman)
Mr R Parkinson-Hare

**For further details and general enquiries about this Agenda
please contact the Committee Officer:**

Susan Farrell on 01603 222966
or email: committees@norfolk.gov.uk



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A g e n d a

1. Apologies

To receive apologies and details of any substitutes

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 November 2013

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3. Members to Declare any interests

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is on your Register of Interests you must not speak or vote on the matter. .

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is not on your Register of Interests you must declare that interest at the meeting and not speak or vote on the matter

In either case you may remain in the room where the meeting is taking place. If you consider that it would be inappropriate in the circumstances to remain in the room, you may leave the room while the matter is dealt with.

If you do not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you may nevertheless have an **Other Interest** in a matter to be discussed if it affects

- your well being or financial position
- that of your family or close friends
- that of a club or society in which you have a management role
- that of another public body of which you are a member to a greater extent than others in your ward.

If that is the case then you must declare such an interest but can speak and vote on the matter.

4. To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

5. Standards and Conduct: Performance and Monitoring Report

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Report by the Head of Law and Monitoring Officer

Chris Walton

Head of Democratic Services

County Hall

Martineau Lane

Norwich

NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 11 March 2014

**Standards Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 13 November 2013**

Present:

Mr T Garrod
Mr B Hannah
Mr M Kiddle- Morris

Mr I Monson
Mr R Parkinson-Hare

Also in Attendance:

Mrs S Farrell – Democratic Support Manager
Mr G Insull – Asst Head of Democratic Services
Ms V McNeill – Head of Law and Monitoring Officer

1. Election of Chairman

Mr Ian Monson was elected Chairman for the ensuing Council year.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

Mr Mark Kiddle-Morris was elected Vice Chairman for the ensuing Council year.

3. Apologies

Mr A Byrne and Mr P Hacon gave their apologies.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2013 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

4. Declarations of Interest

Mr B Hannah explained that he wished to declare an Other Interest, as an unnamed member involved with the complaints forming part of the report at agenda item 7 - Standards and Conduct: Performance and Monitoring Report.

5. Urgent Business

There was none.

6. Standards and Conduct: Performance and Monitoring Report

6.1 The annexed report (item 7) by the Head of Law and Monitoring Officer was received.

6.2 The following points were raised:

- Members noted Article 9 of the Constitution which the Head of Law

had tabled to members new to this Committee of its role.

- It was noted that this was the first meeting held since the May elections and was now subject to the Widdicombe principles of proportional representation on Committees.
- This report was presented following the decision of a Standards Committee prior to the election, with the intention of sharing complaints to enable trends, themes or concerns from complaints against members to be addressed at an early stage. On this occasion, there had been just 4 complaints and no reporting since June 2013, which did not demonstrate any pattern.
- The role of Independent Person to the Standards Committee was explained as the role differed post the Localism Act 2011. The current postholder, Mr Stephen Revell, had been appointed to the post for 4 years. There was a requirement for him to be consulted whenever the Council undertook an investigation or held a hearing. However, more generally his remit was dependent on the Standards Committee. At the March 2013 Committee it had been agreed that Mr Revell would be invited to Standards Committee meetings on an as and when basis. The members of this Committee agreed to continue with this approach.
- It was noted that the Independent Person had no voting powers but Regulations confirmed that his views had to be sought at a hearing but that the Committee was not bound to adhere to the views expressed.
- It was also noted that there was a training workshop being arranged currently for Independent Persons across Norfolk and that Committee members would be invited to attend.
- Members were invited to engage in specific training to support them in the work of this Committee and agreed that procedural standards and conduct matters be arranged to coincide with the next Standards Committee meeting on 19 March 2014.
- Lastly, it was noted that there was now no repository for collating standards complaints nationally and so no comparisons on performance, issues or hot topics could be monitored.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the report updating the Standards Committee on standards and conduct matters from March 2013 to October 2013
2. To continue with the approach taken to date and to invite the Independent Person Mr Stephen Revell, to Standards Committee meetings for his commentary and advice on an as and when basis
3. To arrange a training event on procedural standards and conduct matters, to coincide with the next Standards Committee meeting on 19 March 2014.

7. Register of Councillors' Interests

- 7.1 The annexed report (item 8) by the Head of Law and Monitoring Officer was received.

7.2 The following points were noted:

- The Head of Law reminded members that it was now a criminal offence to fail to declare Discloseable Pecuniary Interests.
- Work was currently ongoing to upload the information provided regarding Councillors' Interests onto the Council's website

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8. Review of Standards Regime following the Localism Act 2011

8.1 The annexed report (item 9) by the Head of Law and Monitoring Officer was received and in particular, members welcomed the House of Commons Library note reviewing the operation of the new provisions.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting finished at 11.00am

**Chairman
Mr Ian Monson**



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Standards and Conduct : Performance and Monitoring Report

Report by the Head of Law and Monitoring Officer

This Report updates the Standards Committee on standards and conduct matters from October 2013 to March 2014

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In May 2013 following elections to the Council, a new Standards Committee was established with the following membership:

4 Conservatives
1 Labour
1 UKIP
1 Liberal Democrat

- 1.2 At its meeting of 13 November 2013 the Standards Committee appointed a new Chairman, Councillor Ian Monson, and vice-chairman Councillor Mark Kiddle-Morris.

2. Performance and Monitoring : October 2013 to March 2014

2.1 Ongoing complaints

- (i) Date: June 2013
Complainant: Members of the public
Complaint: Misuse of position, use of insulting language
Outcome: Decision to investigate made in August 2013, investigation completed and the matter currently with the Independent Person.

2.2 New Complaints since October 2013

- (i) Date: November 2013
Complainant: Unison Norfolk Branch Secretary
Complaint: Failure to value colleagues and/or treat them with respect
Outcome: Following Monitoring Officer assessment, no further action (Decision Notice pending publication)
- (ii) Date: February 2014
Complainant: One Councillor and four members of the public
Complaint: Failure to treat with respect
Outcome: Pending – currently being assessed.

2.3 Decision Notices

There have been no Decision Notices issued since October 2013.

2.4 Hearings

There have been no Standards Hearings during this period.

2.5 Findings and Sanctions

As there have been no Standards Hearings during this period, no sanctions have been imposed by the Standards Committee.

2.6 Consultations with the Independent Person

The Independent Person has been consulted in relation to one complaint during this period.

2.7 Training

2.7.1 The Members of the Standards Committee will receive training on the Code of Conduct and assessment process following this meeting.

2.8 Dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There have been no requests for dispensations during this period.

3. Recommendation:

That Members note the County Council's performance in relation to standards and conduct during the period October 2013 to March 2014 as set out in paragraph 2.

Officer Contact:



If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with: Victoria McNeill Tel No: 01603 223415
email address: victoria.mcneill@norfolk.gov.uk

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