

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON 19 JUNE 2012

PRESENT: Councillor Mr. N. Edwards (in the Chair)
Councillor Mr. E. Davies (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Byrom, Papworth, Rimmer, Robertson
and Parish Councillor D. Warren

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fairclough and Veidman, Independent Member, Mr J. Fraser and Parish Councillor Kermode.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2012 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of the following text in the preamble for Minute No. 14 (The Future of the Standards Regime in Sefton):

“Members of the Committee expressed concern about the current legislative proposals for no representation from Parish Councils or for the retention of existing Independent Members on the Committee charged with the responsibility for the administration of Standards in Sefton and other local authorities.”

4. STANDARDS REGIME AT SEFTON COUNCIL

Further to Minute No. 14 of the meeting held on 13 March 2012, the Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Legal Services which provided a further update on the impact of the Localism Act 2011 and the current standards regime following the Council meeting on 12 April 2012. The report contained the following appendices:

- Local Government Association proposed Code of Conduct
- Department of Communities and Local Government illustrative text for dealing with the conduct of Members and Co-opted Members
- Sefton Council's revised Code of Conduct which had been approved by Council

- Proposed Terms of Reference for the Audit and Governance Committee

The report also provided details of the new Regulations relating to the disclosure of pecuniary interests by local authority members and co-opted members and the appointment of Independent Persons, which would take effect on 1 July 2012; and the action to be taken by Officers on these issues.

Members of the Committee expressed concern that a Parish Council representative had not been appointed as a co-opted member of the three Standards Sub Committees which would deal with complaints relating to the conduct of any Parish Councillors within the Borough of Sefton.

A discussion took place on the arrangements to be made for Members of the Council to be briefed on the revised Code of Conduct prior to the Council Meeting on 5 July 2012, the briefing arrangements for Parish Council representatives, the on-line submission of disclosable pecuniary interests by Members of the Council and the problems that may be encountered within the Merseyside sub region if different Codes of Conduct are implemented by the local authorities.

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Council be requested to give approval to the appointment of a Parish Council Representative and Substitute Representative (appointed by the Sefton Area Partnership Of Local Councils) as a Co-opted Member of the Audit and Governance Standards Sub Committees, to enable him/her to be involved in the consideration of any complaints submitted in respect of the conduct of any Parish Councillor within the Borough of Sefton; and
- (3) the Audit and Governance Committee be requested to give due regard to the Codes of Conduct implemented by other Merseyside local authorities and joint authorities in due course.

5. THANKS TO MEMBERS AND OFFICERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Committee indicated that this would be the last meeting of the Standards Committee and that the responsibility for the administration of Standards would transfer to the Audit and Governance Committee from 1 July 2012. He expressed his thanks to the current and past Members and Officers of the Committee; and Members of the Committee expressed their thanks to Mr Edwards for the fine manner in which he acted as Chair of the Committee over a number of years.