

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON 16 APRIL 2014**

PRESENT: Councillor Roberts (in the Chair)
Councillor McGinnity (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Lord Fearn, John Joseph Kelly, Mclvor,
Papworth, Shaw and Weavers
ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Dutton and Veidman

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brennan, Maher, Mahon and Moncur.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

53. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

**54. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR
COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS DEALING WITH PLANNING
APPLICATIONS**

Further to Minute No. 146 of the Planning Committee of 2 April 2014, the Committee considered the report of the Director of Built Environment setting out proposals to review the Code of Conduct for Councillors and Officers dealing with Planning Applications as set out in the Constitution and to update the Constitution as appropriate.

The following matters were proposed and were intended to provide further transparency, clarity and equity to the processes of the Planning Committee and its decision making:-

- (i) the ongoing monthly training programme for Members to be continued;
- (ii) mandatory training;
- (iii) annual appointments;

- (iv) attendance on the Visiting Panel for Members or substitutes to be strongly advised;
- (v) attendance at the relevant Planning Committee and Visiting Panel meetings by the same Member/substitute wherever possible;
- (vi) Ward Members must contact the appropriate Democratic Services Officer by 12 noon the day before a Committee meeting if they wish to address the Committee regarding an application and make their address after any petitioner, but before the respondent; or before the applicant/agent if there is no petition; and
- (vii) the late submission of materials/photographs by petitioners/applicants to the Committee, at the meeting, to be prohibited.

The Planning Committee had endorsed all of these proposed matters.

During the discussion on the report, a number of Members expressed the view that when a petition has been submitted to a Planning Committee meeting, ward Members should continue to address the Planning Committee after the petitioner and respondent.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be recommended to approve the measures as set out in the report and that the Code of Conduct for Councillors and Officers Dealing with Planning Applications in the Constitution be updated to reflect the approved changes, subject to the following amended matter (vi):

“Ward Members must contact the appropriate Democratic Services Officer by 12 noon the day before a Committee meeting if they wish to address the Committee regarding an application and make their address after any petitioner and the respondent; or before the applicant/agent if there is no petition.”

55. HEARINGS SUB - COMMITTEE - OUTCOME OF INVESTIGATION

The Committee considered the report of the Acting Monitoring Officer on the outcome of a recent investigation into a complaint made against a Maghull Town Councillor.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the decisions and recommendations of the Hearings Sub-Committee be noted; and
- (2) the Acting Monitoring Officer be requested to again request a response to the recommendations from the Clerk to Maghull Town Council and details of the response be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

56. CONTRACTS PROCEDURE RULES

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Corporate Services setting out proposed amended Contract Procedure Rules. The report indicated that the Council had been working in partnership with Halton Borough Council (which is recognised by the Government as one of the top 10 Councils for companies to do business with), in order to review the existing procurement processes with a view to making systems more streamlined, reducing the administrative burden on those suppliers who wish to do business with the Council and increasing the transparency of the procurement process. A pilot process had been implemented which had resulted in a saving of over £35,000 on a spend of £355,000 for the period between 1 November 2013 and 1 March 2014.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the results of the pilot process for changes to the Council's procurement process be noted; and
- (2) the Contract Procedure Rules be amended as set out in the report.