



**NOTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2014**

Held at 5.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors R A Adair (Chairman), G Davidson, J E Fearon, J E Greenwood, A MacInnes, B A Nicholls

Independent Members: G Norbury, K White, W A Wood

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

J R Baggaley

OFFICERS PRESENT:

P Cox	Senior Solicitor
V Nightingale	Senior Member Support Officer
D Swaine	Executive Manager - Operations and Corporate Governance

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence

4. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

5. Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9 July 2014 were accepted as a true record.

6. Annual Review – Cases and Training Update

The Monitoring Officer presented a report which outlined the number of cases that had been received during 2013 and 2014. He reminded Members that a new code had been introduced in 2012 and that the independent members of the Committee had been revised. Council had reviewed the changes in September 2013 and approved the appointment of Mr Baggaley as the Independent Person. Since the new code had been introduced there had been 17 cases. The Committee was informed that quite often a judgement had to be made on whether it was a complaint against a councillor, there had actually been a breach of the code and if it should be referred to another authority, ie the County Council.

Five of the cases related to one parish council and only one case, which concerned the non-declaration of a pecuniary interest, had been referred to the Police. The Committee was informed that there was a Nottinghamshire protocol with the Police, which designated a specific police officer as a contact

point. In respect of the case that had been referred to the Police the Committee was informed that no further action was taken. The Committee felt that it had taken quite some time to finalise this complaint but accepted that the Police had to prioritise cases. However, it was felt that it was imperative that any delays were communicated to all parties to ensure that the Borough Council was seen to be progressing the complaint.

The Committee discussed the need to raise awareness of the importance of registering and declaring pecuniary interests, especially after the elections in May 2015. Officers stated that there would be a training session as part of the induction process for new Borough Councillors and that this could be included in the programme for Parish Forums. It was noted that parish clerks had a role in ensuring that parish councillors were aware of the code and its implications. The Committee noted that the Code of Conduct stated that Councillors should 'protect the public interest' but they felt that people also needed to consider and take into account how their actions would be perceived by the public.

In respect of training it was felt that it would be beneficial if officers investigated what other organisations, for example the National Association of Local Councils, offered. Also the Committee felt that there should be produced a clear written statement of the principles, which should include examples.

The Executive Manager - Operations and Corporate Governance stated that following the elections there should also be further training for the Standards Committee members and the Independent Person.

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm.