

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2013 at 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Boaden (Chairman) Councillors Mrs Bowman, Mrs Bradley, Craig, McDevitt, Mrs Parsons.

OFFICERS: Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

ST.08/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Stothard and Dr Tiplady.

ST.09/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Bradley declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item B.1 Standards Arrangements: Appointment of Independent Person. The interest related to the fact that she was on the Board of Governors of Carlisle College with one of the applicants.

Dr P Tiplady submitted an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item B.1 Standards Arrangements: Appointment of Independent Person. The interest related to the fact that he had met one of the applicants at a social function.

ST.10/13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2013 be noted.

ST.11/13 CODE OF CONDUCT: PRINCIPLES IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Director of Governance submitted report GD.33/13 which reviewed the first twelve months' operation of the City Council's Code of Conduct and proposed an amendment to the Council's Code of Conduct to reflect the recommendation made in relation to the seven principles of public life in the January 2013 report on Standards in Public Life.

The Director of Governance reminded the Committee that the Council had been operating under revised Standards Committee and Code of Conduct arrangements since 1 July 2013. The changed arrangements had operated well and two matters had been raised which had been dealt with informally. One formal complaint had been made which was duly considered in accordance with the approved procedures and held to be unfounded.

In January 2013 the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) published its fourteenth report. The CSPL's work related to standard of conduct of all holders of public office and its reports and recommendations formed a significant part of the City Council's standards framework, and in particular, the principles of conduct. The report recommended a revision to the 'the seven principles of public life' which were incorporated into the Council's Code of Conduct. The CSPL report decided that the principles should remain the same but recommended that the descriptions be updated and a preamble be

added. Appendix 2 of report GD.33/13 showed the existing wording and the revised wording.

The Director of Governance informed the Committee that the revisions to the principles had been discussed by the Cumbria Monitoring Officers' Group and, in addition, the Council's Independent Person, Dr Tiplady, had been consulted and his comments had been included in the report.

RESOLVED – 1) That the operation of the new Standards arrangements during their first twelve months be noted;

2) That the wording in the City Council Code of Conduct associated with the 'seven principles of public life' be amended as recommended by the Committee for Standards in Public Life and as set out in Appendix 2 of report GD.33/13;

3) That the Standards Committee recommend to the City Council that the Code of Conduct be amended to incorporate the said updated wording.

ST.12/13 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph number (as indicated in brackets against each minute) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act.

ST.13/13 APPOINTMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S INDEPENDENT PERSON (Public and Press excluded by virtue of Paragraph 1)

The Chairman reported that pursuant to the decision of the Standards Committee at their meeting on 7 June 2013 interviews had been carried out for the position of Independent Person.

The position had been advertised on the City Council's website and in the News and Star newspaper on three separate occasions. The advertisement generated five applications.

The five applications, the recruitment pack and the Standards Committee Terms of Reference had been circulated as part of the report. The five applicants had been interviewed on 12 June 2013 by the Chairman of the Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer, Dr Tiplady and Councillor Mrs Bowman. In terms of administration for the Standards Committee it was felt that it would be preferable to have two Independent Persons which would allow the Council to deal with any conflict of interest.

All of the applicants had been of a high calibre and the interview panel unanimously recommended that applicant (i) be appointed as Independent Person until 30 June 2017 and applicant (ii) be appointed as Independent Person until 30 June 2016. The numerical references being those utilised in Report GD.32/13. Having staggered end dates for the appointments would ensure that the Council would not be without the required Independent Person by virtue of terms of office expiring at the same time.

Both candidates had demonstrated an interest in local issues and the required level of awareness of ethics, pressures on elected Members and confidentiality. The balance of

high level legal experience and mediation expertise between the two candidates was thought by the panel to potentially be of great benefit to the council the Community.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Standards recommend to Council that Applicant (i) be appointed as Independent Person until 30 June 2017 and Applicant (ii) be appointed as Independent Person until 30 June 2016.

ST.14/13 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Standards Committee thanked Dr Tiplady, Reverend Libby and Mr Fraser for their continued dedication in the role of Independent Person and for their support during the development of the new Code of Conduct.

(The meeting ended at 10.10am)