

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
25 FEBRUARY 2014

(19.15 - 20.05)

PRESENT Councillors Peter McCabe (in the Chair), John Dehaney, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Philip Jones, Ian Munn BSc, MRTPI(Rtd), David Williams

Sophie Bowen, Nigel Brotherton and Beverley Huie

Fiona Thomsen (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Margaret Culleton (Head of Internal Audit), Julia Regan (Head of Democracy Services) and Colin Millar (Democracy Services)

ALSO PRESENT Derek Prior (Independent Person)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Councillor Rod Scott

2. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

None

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2013 are agreed as a correct record

4. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT AUTHORISATIONS (Agenda Item 4)

Members asked that a future report include information on the outcome of investigations where covert surveillance was authorised and used.

RESOLVED: That the committee notes the information.

5. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012/13 - IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE (Agenda Item 5)

Members asked for additional information to be circulated on:

- Disaster recovery and backup arrangements
- Transfer of organisational charts to web site
- Possibility of publishing partnership register on the web site

The report was otherwise noted

6. COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS (Agenda Item 6)

Noted there were no complaints

7. WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 7)

Noted

8. MEMBER INDUCTION (Agenda Item 8)

Members discussed the draft handbook and training programme with the Head of Democracy Services:

- Members enquiry line needed improvement in response times
- Add links to further information for each section
- Link to census information should be prominent
- More guidance needed on social media
- Declarations of interest information needed to be prominent
- Training should use other methods where appropriate rather than just attending sessions
- Equality issues and understanding the community needed to be emphasised
- Personal conduct issues including member/officer relations should be addressed
- The handbook would be an important contribution to good governance and should be widely available including publication on the web site

The Head of Democracy Services said that she would be attending the count on election night and that declarations of interest would be one of the items being brought to all members immediate attention.

The points raised and any others forwarded by members would be taken into account in finalising the handbook.

The committee was of the view that member training was an important issue and needed to be properly supported.