

At a Meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **19th** day of **MARCH 2013** at **10.00 am**.

Present:

Cllr J McInnes – Chairman	
Cllr M Ewings – Vice-Chairman	
Cllr R Baldwin	Cllr A Leech
Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer	
Committee & Ombudsman Link Officer	

In attendance: Cllr J Sheldon

SC 12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs A Clish-Green, D Horn, J Moody, D Moyse and L Rose.

***SC 13 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th September 2012, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

***SC 14 UPDATE ON THE WEST DEVON MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT AND COMPLAINT PROCESSES**

The Monitoring Officer presented a report (page 2 to the Agenda) updating the Committee on the West Devon Members' Code of Conduct and its effect on the number of complaints received. The Code was introduced on 1st July 2012 as required by legislation and the number of complaints received since then appeared to have reduced. It was difficult to provide comparable data of complaints received and their type as the new Code was very different from the one in force until 30th June 2012.

The majority of Town and Parish Councils within the Borough had adopted either the West Devon Code or that provided by the National Association of Local Councils. The Code provided for complaints to be made to the Town/Parish Clerk for onward transmission to the Borough Council's Monitoring Officer for consideration. This appeared to be working well and may have contributed to the reduction in the number of complaints being made. It was also noted that Devonwide, the number of complaints made had fallen following the introduction of the new Code.

The Monitoring Officer was in the process of developing a "frequently asked questions" paper to help the Parishes with any questions which may arise and it was suggested that this paper be also circulated to all Members of the Borough Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and that a further report be presented to the Committee's Meeting in July 2013, showing comparable complaints statistics of the old Code with the new Code.

***SC 15 SUMMARY OF STANDARDS COMPLAINTS SINCE 1st JULY 2012**

In the light of the discussion arising on the previous item (Minute No. SC 14), it was **RESOLVED** that the report prepared by the Monitoring Officer (page 5 to the Agenda) be received and noted.

***SC 16 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON(S)**

The Monitoring Officer reported that one of the former Independent Members had been appointed as independent person by the June 2012 Council, under transitional provisions until July 2013. Subsequent regulations suggest that appointments made before 24th July 2012 could be made permanent and the independent person, who was very experienced, had indicated that they would accept a permanent appointment.

Subject to clarification of the above regulations, it would only be necessary to appoint two further Independent Persons. The Monitoring Officer would, therefore, proceed with these new appointments including placing of an advertisement in the local newspaper and on the Council's web site. The Committee noted the Monitoring Officer's report.

(The Meeting terminated at 10.30 am.)