

## **Unconfirmed minutes – subject to approval/amendment at the next meeting of the Committee**

### **Standards Committee**

10 June 2013 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 2.15 p.m. at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mrs Jupp (Chairman), Mr Barling, Mr Burrett, Mr McAra, Mr Peters, Mr R Rogers, Mr Smith and Mrs Urquhart.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Acraman.

In attendance: Mrs Elson and Mr Longmore (independent persons).

### **Declaration of Interests**

1. None declared.

### **Minutes**

2. The Committee considered the minutes of the last meeting and noted that Mrs Elson and Mr Longmore had not been asked to attend on that occasion, hence they were not in attendance.
3. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 February 2013 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **Terms of Reference**

4. The Committee noted its terms of reference (copy attached to the signed minutes).

### **Complaints Annual Monitoring Report**

5. The Committee considered a report by the Head of Law and Governance (copy attached to the signed minutes) which summarised details of the complaints received in the last year.
6. The report was introduced by Dave Loveman, Customer Relations Manager, who confirmed that the number of complaints over recent years was broadly stable. He clarified that the routine reporting of faults, such as reporting a highways fault, was treated as a service request rather than a complaint. A complaint was defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about a service.
7. The Committee welcomed the report but emphasised the need to be clear about what it actually covered – a title of 'complaints regarding levels of service delivery' might be clearer to members of the public. It also highlighted that local members would often act as a conduit for residents when requesting services or complaining about them, which may not always be reflected in the complaints statistics.

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8. Resolved – That the report be noted and that future reports be entitled 'Annual report on complaints regarding levels of service delivery'.

## **Report Issued by the Local Government Ombudsman on a complaint against the Council**

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Head of Law and Governance (copy attached to the signed minutes), which advised of a report issued by the Local Government Ombudsman.

10. The Head of Law and Governance confirmed that the findings of the Ombudsman had been accepted by the County Council. The complaint was about the process of assigning a value to a resident's share of property where she lived before moving into residential care, used in determining what charges that person should or should not pay towards the cost of their care.

11. The Committee expressed disappointment that the case subject to the complaint had clearly taken too long to deal with, but acknowledged that the County Council had sought a resolution to the issue at an early stage. It hoped that the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services would ensure that the procedure for assessing property when determining charges to a person for residential care was reviewed, and that information for people was helpful and clear.

12. Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Health and Adults Services be asked to ensure that the procedure for assessing property when determining charges to a person for residential care is reviewed, and that information for people is helpful and clear.

## **Standards Committee Annual Report**

13. The Committee considered a draft report for submission to the County Council (copy attached to the signed minutes) which advised of its work over the last year.

14. The Committee considered that the report presented a true reflection of its business over the last year.

15. Resolved – That the draft Standards Committee Annual Report be approved for submission to the Council on 19 July 2013.

## **Independent Persons**

16. The Committee noted that the current independent persons' terms of office would come to an end at the end of June 2013. The Chairman passed on the thanks of members and officers of the Council to Mrs Elson, Mr Hammett and Mr Longmore for their dedicated service to the Committee in recent years.

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17. Tony Kershaw, Head of Law and Governance, reported that other local authorities in the area would be recruiting independent persons and asked if the Committee would support a pooling arrangement for independent persons across other authorities. The Committee agreed that this would be a good way forward in view of the low levels of case work experienced by the Committee, but that a recruitment exercise would need to be followed if pooling did not prove to be possible.

18. Resolved – That the Head of Law and Governance be asked to enter into “pooling” arrangements for independent persons with other local authorities, or to commence a recruitment process if this does not prove to be possible.

### **Code of Conduct Training**

19. The Committee noted that training was being given by the Head of Law and Governance and by Mr Hammett, Independent Person. The Committee emphasised that it strongly encouraged all members to take part in training and requested an update report to its next meeting on how many had undertaken the training.

20. Resolved – That the Head of Law and Governance submits a report in November 2013 on the number of members who have undertaken code of conduct training since May 2013.

### **Confidential Reporting Policy**

21. The Committee noted that the Head of Law and Governance had not received any referrals via the policy since the last meeting of the Committee.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

22. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will take place on 4 November 2013 at 2.15 p.m. at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 3.23 p.m.

Chairman