

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

Standards Committee

Agenda Item No. 2

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

Present:

Mr Coleman (Chairman), Mr Acraman, Mr Britton, Mr Hodgson, Mrs Jupp, Mrs Millson, Mr Rogers and Mr Wilkinson.

In attendance: Mr Hammett (Independent Person)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Wilsdon.

Declaration of Interests

18. None declared.

Minutes

19. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 June 2012 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Code of Conduct – Protocol for the Use of IT Equipment Supplied to Members

20. The Committee considered a report by the Head of Law and Governance (copy appended to the signed minutes), which proposed a new Protocol to reflect current acceptable standards of usage and to introduce more standard arrangements for the supply of computer equipment to members.

21. The report was introduced by Debbie Allman, Service Manager Democratic Services, who drew the Committee's attention to one amendment, to clarify that members only had to log on to any internet connection every 30 days, rather than this needing to be at a County Council building. It was therefore unnecessary for members to make a special journey for this purpose, so it was not necessary to mention this in the Members Allowance Scheme.

22. The Committee supported the majority of the draft protocol, and hoped that a short summary could be produced for new members following the election. It questioned the restriction on members forwarding emails from their County Council accounts to personal email accounts. Andrew Trace, IT Services, advised that this provision was to avoid a risk to data security, as personal email accounts may not have the same level of security as the County Council's system.

23. While it appreciated the importance of this point, the Committee believed that members should be able to forward information to personal accounts for brief practical use, such as to print from another printer or to read on a different computer screen. Mr Trace agreed to investigate whether this could be

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permitted, provided that the data was deleted from the personal email account as soon as possible after this practical use.

24. Resolved –

- (1) That, subject to the amendments in minutes 21 and 23, the proposed IT protocol be endorsed for submission to the County Council on 22 March 2013 for approval.
- (2) That a proposal be endorsed for submission to the County Council on 22 March 2013 that the Members' Allowance Scheme be amended to allow members to claim travel expenses when they travel to a hub building to allow their computer equipment to be repaired or replaced.

Code of Conduct – Guidance on Propriety and Official Conduct for Officers

25. The Committee received a report from the Director of Strategic Development and the Head of Human Resources (copy appended to the signed minutes) which advised of a number of updates required to the existing guidance, to bring it up to date with equalities legislation and changes to the County Council's organisational structure.

26. The Committee accepted the need for the changes to reflect current legislation and the current organisational structure, but questioned why assistants to political groups were included in the list of politically restricted posts and why the list of unacceptable political activities appeared to include election agents without any exception for parish councillors. The Head of Law and Governance agreed to check these points prior to the submission of the report to the County Council.

27. Resolved – That, subject to the Head of Law and Governance checking the political restriction queries raised in minute 26 above, the proposed changes to the Guidance on Propriety and Official Conduct for Officers which will bring the document up to date be endorsed for approval by the County Council on 22 March 2013.

Standards Independent Persons – Description of Role

28. The Committee considered proposed wording for the role description of Independent Persons, produced by the Head of Law and Governance (copy appended to the signed minutes).

29. Resolved – That the proposed wording for the Standards Independent Persons description of role be approved.

Confidential Reporting Policy

30. 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.

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Code of Conduct Training

31. The Committee noted that plans were underway for the provision of training on the code of conduct and standards at one of the initial introductory sessions for members following the election and more detailed training which would follow later in May and June. This would be given by the Head of Law and Governance with the possible involvement of one or more of the Committee's independent persons.

32. The Committee emphasised that all members should be encouraged to attend the training and that consideration should be given to holding more sessions to keep group sizes small, as this would assist the effectiveness of training. It asked to be informed of any members who did not attend any of the sessions.

33. Resolved –

- (1) That the proposed training arrangements be supported.
- (2) The Head of Law and Governance be asked to report to the next meeting on any members who have not attended the standards training in May and June 2013.

Date of Next Meeting

34. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will be held on 10 June 2013 at 2.15 p.m. at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 3.26 p.m.

Chairman