

6 June 2016 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 2.15 p.m. at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mrs Arculus (Chairman), Mr Acraman, Mr Barnard, Mr Griffiths, Mr Petch, Mr Peters, Mr R Rogers and Mrs Urquhart.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Smith.

Independent Person Resignation

1. It was noted that Mr Kieran Diamond, Independent Person, had resigned with immediate effect. The Committee asked the Chairman to send a letter of thanks to him for his work as an Independent Person.

Declaration of Interest

2. None declared.

Annual Monitoring Report of Complaints regarding Levels of Service Delivery

3. The Committee received a report by the Acting Chief Operating Officer and Director of Customer Service (copy appended to the signed minutes), which set out a summary of complaints and compliments received in 2015.

4. The report was introduced by Dave Loveman (Customer Relations Manager), who advised that levels of complaints had remained broadly stable and confirmed that where complaints were upheld or partially upheld, the Council was committed to improvement as a result of the learning from the case.

5. The Committee agreed that the general situation showed a positive approach to complaints handling, although emphasised that if a local member was involved in a complaint or claim, they should be kept informed of the progress. It also highlighted the need for awareness among all officers of the complaints procedure to ensure that customers receive a consistent service. The Committee welcomed the increase in compliments and emphasised the need to highlight this.

6. In answer to a request for clarification, Mr Loveman confirmed that the term 'vexatious' was no longer used by the County Council, but a complainant could very occasionally be given the designation 'unreasonably persistent' whereby limitations would be placed on that complainant's rights to contact the County Council. This was only invoked in a tiny minority of cases.

7. Resolved –

(i) That the report be noted.

- (ii) That the Customer Relations Manager and Director of Law, Assurance and Strategy be asked to ensure that officers keep local members informed if the local member is involved in a customer complaint or claim.
- (iii) That the Annual Report of the Standards Committee should include reference to the increase in the number of compliments received about services in 2015 and the change of the designation of 'vexatious' complainants to 'unreasonably persistent' complainants.

Standards Committee Annual Report

8. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law, Assurance and Strategy (copy appended to the signed minutes), which provided a draft annual report of the Committee's work for submission to the County Council.

9. The report was introduced by the Director of Law, Assurance and Strategy, who advised that it had been a quiet year for the Committee as no reportable complaints about member conduct had been received. He highlighted the need for the report to mention the resignation of Mr Diamond as Independent Person, and to make the amends as agreed in minute 7(iii) above. Subject to these amendments, the Committee supported the draft report.

10. Resolved – That, subject to the amendments mentioned in minute 9, the draft Annual Report be approved for submission to the County Council on 22 July 2016.

Confidential Reporting Policy

11. The Committee noted that the Director of Law, Assurance and Strategy had not received any new referrals via the Policy since the last meeting of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.

Chairman