

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Standards Committee held at the Council Offices,
Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Monday, 21 March 2016 commencing at
2:00 pm**

Present:

Tewkesbury Borough Council
Members:

Councillor M Dean
Councillor T A Spencer
Councillor P D Surman (Chair)
Councillor M G Sztymiak and
Councillor H A E Turbyfield

Non-Voting Independent Persons:

Mr P J Kimber

ST.12 ANNOUNCEMENTS

12.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.

ST.13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

13.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S E Hillier-Richardson and M J Williams (Vice-Chair); Independent Person, Mr M Jauch; and Parish representative, Mr D J Horsfall.

ST.14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

14.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 26 June 2012 and took effect from 1 July 2012.

14.2 There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

ST.15 MINUTES

15.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ST.16 REVIEW OF PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONS

- 16.1 The report of the Monitoring Officer, circulated at Pages No. 5-24, asked Members to consider the proposed amendments to the Protocol for Member/Officer Relations and to recommend the Protocol to the Council for approval.
- 16.2 The Monitoring Officer explained that the Standards Committee had met as a Working Group on two occasions to review the Protocol and during that process had met with a number of Members and Officers to gain their views. The Working Group had considered the amendments that were required to be made to the Protocol and had published the amended version on the Council's intranet for consultation purposes. As there had been no further major amendments suggested, the Working Group was happy for the amended Protocol to be circulated to the Standards Committee without the need for a further meeting of the Working Group.
- 16.3 Attention was drawn to Appendix 3 to the report which set out the proposed amended Protocol and, for completeness, Appendices 1 and 2 were also attached to the report which showed the comments that had been received throughout the process and the responses to those from the Working Group. In terms of Appendix 2, the Monitoring Officer asked Members to consider if they would like to make any further amendments taking those points into account.
- 16.4 During the discussion which ensued, it was agreed that no further amendments needed to be made. One Member suggested that many of the Members and Officers that the Working Group had spoken to had not read the Protocol until they had been asked to comment on it and he questioned whether something could be done to address this. In response, the Monitoring Officer explained that people only tended to read the document when they needed it but it was part of the Constitution so it was available to all, including members of the public.
- 16.5 Accordingly, it was
RESOLVED That it be **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the revised Protocol for Member/Officer Relations, as attached to the report at Appendix 3, be **APPROVED**.

ST.17 REVIEW OF PROTOCOL FOR COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

- 17.1 The report of the Monitoring Officer, circulated at Pages No. 25-27, asked Members to agree the mechanism for which a review of the Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process would take place and sought nominations for Members to serve on a joint Standards and Planning Committee Working Group.
- 17.2 Members were informed that, at its meeting on 14 April 2015, the Council had considered the revised Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process and resolved that the Protocol be adopted with a review after 12 months. The initial review had been undertaken by a joint Working Group made up of four Members of the Planning Committee and four Members of the Standards Committee; this mechanism had worked extremely well and it was therefore suggested that a similar arrangement be put in place to examine how the new Protocol had worked after being operational for 12 months and whether any further amendments were required.

- 17.3 Previously the Standards Committee had nominated Tewkesbury Borough Councillors Brian Calway and Mike Dean; Parish representative, Jeremy Horsfall; and Independent Person, Martin Jauch to serve on the Working Group and it was suggested, for consistency, that those Members remaining on the Standards Committee may wish to put themselves forward to serve on the Working Group again. In respect of Brian Calway, as he was no longer a Member of the Council, there was one vacancy to fill and it was suggested that the Standards Committee Chair, Councillor Philip Surman, would be a sensible replacement.
- 17.4 A brief discussion ensued during which a Member questioned whether the Working Group would be interviewing people again. In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that she anticipated there would be one or two meetings at which Members could discuss how the planning site visits were going etc. In terms of training for Planning Committee Members, a Member questioned whether this could be made mandatory. In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that all Members on the Committee, and those that were asked to be substitutes, had received training initially and this was compulsory; for any additional training thereafter, i.e. seminars etc., it would not be possible to make attendance mandatory. However, some external training was to be arranged, and other training opportunities would continue to be provided, and it was hoped that Members would take full advantage of that. A Member asked that, when the Protocol was reviewed, consideration be given to the inclusion of a sentence to say that it was highly recommended that Members of the Planning Committee attend all relevant training. The Monitoring Officer noted this request and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED

That the Joint Standards and Planning Working Group be re-established to review the Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process and that the Standards Committee Members to serve on the Working Group be as follows:

Councillors Mike Dean and Philip Surman; Parish representative, Jeremy Horsfall; and Independent Person, Martin Jauch.

ST.18 SEPARATE BUSINESS

- 18.1 The Chair proposed, and it was

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

ST.19 SEPARATE MINUTES

- 19.1 The separate Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ST.20 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

(Exempt –Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – Information relating to any individual)

20.1 The Committee considered an update report on complaints received.

The meeting closed at 2:35 pm