

**Minutes of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee
27 February 2013**

Present:

Councillors:

J.A. Dale

R.D. Dunn

A.E. Friday

A.J. Mitchell

C.A. Bannister

Independent Members:

Mr Murray Litvak (Chairman)

Mrs Sue Faulkner (Vice Chairman)

In attendance: Independent Person – Roger Pett
Head of Human Resources – Jan Hunt

Apologies: Councillor S.E.W. Budd

62/13 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2012 were approved as a correct record.

The Chairman also placed on record his thanks to the following for their contribution to the recent Code of Conduct Hearing: Panel members Councillors Bannister, Friday and Dunn; Richard Lingard, Independent Investigator and Victoria Statham, the Council's Principal Solicitor.

63/13 Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures were made.

64/13 Independent Person

The Monitoring Officer introduced Roger Pett, one of the newly-appointed Independent Persons, to the Committee. Mr. Pett gave a resume of his background and his experience to-date of being an Independent Person.

65/13 Decision of the Hearings Panel

The decision of the hearing panel held on 18 December 2012 and 18 January 2013 had been circulated to members of the Committee for information. The Committee reviewed the whole process.

RESOLVED to note that:

- (1) The Committee would have preferred to re-convene the day after the 18 December 2012 rather than incurring a delay until 18 January 2013.
- (2) The time from receipt of the complaint to the final decision being made was too long.
- (3) The Committee would have preferred the decision notice to have been sent to them sooner than it was.
- (4) Training had been put in hand for Councillor Davis who was keen to work through the sanctions imposed on him.

66/13 Hearing Procedures

The Committee discussed the report on amendments to hearing procedures and raised the following points:

1. Page 26, para. 50 – the Independent Person's attendance at a hearing. The Committee agreed to delete the words "...to advise the panel..."
2. Page 27, para. 53e. – the issue of what to publish and where. Whilst the Committee agreed that the word 'or' in line 2 should be replaced by 'and/or', they also agreed that clarification was needed.

RESOLVED that the Monitoring Officer, in conjunction with the Chairman, would circulate proposed alternative wording for the clause at paragraph 53e.

67/13 Gifts and Hospitality

The Committee discussed the report of the Monitoring Officer suggesting provisions to be added to the new Members' Code of Conduct covering: gifts and hospitality; membership of outside bodies and organisations; and dealing with the registration and declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The Monitoring Officer consult with Management Team and staff as part of the changes proposed under the Staff Code of Conduct;
- (2) The provisions covering membership of outside bodies to be reviewed in the light of discussion at the meeting and submitted to a future meeting for consideration; and
- (3) The Conflicts of Interest Policy to be reviewed in the light of discussion at the meeting and submitted to a future meeting for consideration.

68/13 Staff Code of Conduct

The Committee received the report of the Monitoring Officer on the review of the Staff Code of Conduct.

The Head of Human Resources stated that the Code had been simplified and trimmed down from its original length.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) Any staff declarations of interest (3.4 page 66) should be available for inspection but the list should be restricted to those with a need to see the declarations.
- (2) The Committee give its wholehearted support to the Head of Human Resources in consulting with UNISON on the revised Code.

69/13 Work Programme

The Committee received a copy of its work programme for the period 2013 – 2014.

The Committee discussed the need for councillors' training on the Code of Conduct and its component parts.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the work programme as submitted be noted and
- (2) that the Committee receive training on the hearings process.