

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday 25 April 2012 at County Hall, Lewes.

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PRESENT - Mrs C Swan (Independent Chairman),  
Mr T Elliott and Mrs A Holden (Independent members)  
Councillors Healy and Stogdon

### 5. MINUTES

5.1 RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 27 February 2012 as a correct record.

### 6 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

6.1 Councillor Daniel

### 7. REPORTS

7.1 A copy of the report referred to below is contained in the minute book.

### 8 URGENT ITEM

8.1 The Committee agreed that it should receive an update in relation to the current position on the Code of Conduct for Councillors and the Local Standards Framework.

### 9. ANNUAL REPORT

9.1 The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Community Services that provided an update in relation to Member conduct issues and the work of the Standards Committee.

9.2 During discussion, the Committee expressed the view that councillors should be required to update and sign their financial and other interests return on an annual basis.

9.3 Members agreed to the following changes to the report before it was submitted to the County Council:

- To add a paragraph in relation to the consultation with the Committee in relation to the Local Standards Framework and Code of Conduct; and
- A proposal that councillors be required to update their financial and other interest returns on an annual basis

9.3 RESOLVED to (1) note the report; and

(2) recommend to the County Council the annual report for consideration

## 10 FUTURE OF THE LOCAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

10.1 The Monitoring Officer reported that the proposed revised Code of Conduct previously considered by the Committee was due to be submitted to the County Council for consideration on 15 May 2012. The Regulations in relation to pecuniary interests had not yet been published and it was likely that transitional provisions would be introduced allowing for the current arrangements to be extended by 6 months.

10.2 The Committee considered draft Codes of Conduct that had recently been produced by the Local Government Association and CLG. The Committee were of the view that these Codes were much looser in style, and the Committee had concerns regarding the degree to which their content would be open to interpretation, making it difficult to enforce, and creating a degree of uncertainty with members, and those they deal with, about what behaviour is acceptable.

10.3 The Committee agreed that it was happy with the draft Code previously considered, which in broad terms was likely to be adopted by the district and borough councils in East Sussex thereby creating a level of consistency in East Sussex.

## 11 INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

11.1 The Monitoring Officer reported that this might be the last meeting of the current Committee and thanked the independent members for the contribution over the years which was greatly valued and appreciated.