

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Standards Committee** held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth on Thursday, 19 January 2017 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT

Mr J. Jackson
(Independent Chair, in the Chair)

COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Burt, E.
Homer, C.

Murray, A.H.
Kelly, P.

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Buckle, D

OFFICERS

Henry, L.
Bennett, Mrs L.M.

Monitoring Officer
Senior Democratic Services Officer

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors E. Armstrong, L. Pidcock, A. Tebbutt, G. Webb, Parish Councillor D. Parker, and Mrs J. Common

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Friday, 4 November 2016, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair with the following amendments:-

4. Date of Next Meeting

This should read Thursday 19 January 2017.

Ch.'s Initials.....

5. Member Complaint NCC 04/15

- A. (ii) This should read 'Paragraph 2: He/she shall not behave in any way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.

8. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

1. Berwick upon Tweed Town Council – Hoey Ainscough Review

Members were informed of work that had been carried out with Berwick upon Tweed Town Council in an effort to promote and maintain high standards of conduct among that authority's members. (Report attached as **Appendix A**)

Members welcomed the Hoey Ainscough Review which they commented was a very thorough, constructive and excellent report. It was noted that the report appeared to have been generally well received by Berwick upon Tweed Town Council and the recommendations had been agreed at its meeting on 9 January 2017. The report called for monitoring by Northumberland County Council to take place after six months and then 12 months, but it may be possible for this to take place quarterly if the Standards Committee required this. As the recommendations had only just been agreed it was important to allow some time for the recommendations to take effect.

There was a general feeling that the recommendations put forward in the report could be a useful best practice guide for other Parish and Town Councils. The document had been made publicly available and so other Parish/Town Councils would be free to use the recommendations contained therein. Comment was made regarding the cost to Northumberland County Council of providing an interim Clerk to the Town Council on a secondment basis, however, it was pointed out that these costs were being met by the Town Council itself.

RESOLVED that the work undertaken with Berwick upon Tweed Town Council in an effort to promote and maintain high standards of conduct at the authority among its members be noted.

2. Code of Conduct complaint NCC 04/15 (Cllr. K. Little)

Members were informed of the outcome of the code of conduct complaint against Councillor K. Little of Haltwhistle Town Council (Ref: NCC 04/15). (Report attached as **Appendix B**).

The Monitoring Officer reported that Haltwhistle Town Council was having difficulty in appointing a training provider at a reasonable cost. The

Society of Local Council Clerks had now been approached with a view to providing the recommended training. Members noted that this training would be made available to all Haltwhistle Town Council Members, although none would be compelled to attend.

RESOLVED that the outcome of the code of conduct complaint against Councillor K. Little of Haltwhistle Town Council (NCC 04/15) be noted.

3. Code of Conduct Complaints – Progress Report

Members received a report on the progress with complaints received by the authority under the new arrangements adopted by the authority for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011 on caseloads. (Report attached to the signed minutes as **Appendix B**).

The Monitoring Officer reported that an additional complaint had been received.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 20 April 2017 at 2.00 p.m. in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Morpeth.

CHAIR _____.

DATE _____.