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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

4 July 2013 – 10.00 am

PRESENT:

Councillor Sutton (in the Chair); Councillors Collins, Pettit and Stone.

Mr C Skinner (Monitoring Officer), Mr R Hodds (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Mr G Jones (Information Manager).

An Apology for absence was received from Councillor Jeal.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2013 were approved.

With regard to the item relating to the Code of Conduct Complaint when the Committee had agreed with the investigating officer that Councillor Jermany did treat Councillors Jeal and T Wainwright with disrespect and did contravene the Great Yarmouth Borough Council Code of Conduct, and that the Monitoring Officer had been requested to send a letter of censure to Councillor Jermany for not following procedure and usurping the authority of the Chairman of the Licensing Committee and to request Councillor Jermany to make a written apology to the complainants Councillor Jeal and T Wainwright. The Chairman asked whether in fact Councillor Jermany had made such written apology. The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that to his knowledge Councillor Jermany had still to send a written apology to both Councillors of Jeal and T Wainwright.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Monitoring Officer be requested to send a further letter to Councillor Jermany advising him of the Standards Committee's disappointment that he has not as yet sent a written apology to Councillors Jeal and T Wainwright as requested by the Standards Committee, and that a copy of the Monitoring Officer's letter be forwarded to the Conservative Group Leader.

2. REVISED CONSTITUTION

Members were reminded that in accordance with Article 9, paragraph 9.3(j) of the Constitution, one of the roles and functions of the Standards Committee is to have an oversight of the Council's Constitution. Accordingly, Members are now asked to consider the revised Council Constitution. The Information Manager reported that one of the main changes to the Constitution related to the Access to Information Procedure Rules (paragraph 22) which now included provisions for the rights of access to meetings and documents by Councillors.

In discussing the Constitution, the Committee gave consideration to the following issues:-

- The issue of adjournments of the Standards Committee meetings to consider their decision and whether Members under the rights of access to meetings provisions would be able to remain in the meeting. The Monitoring Officer agreed to clarify the situation and if necessary to make an amendment to the revised Constitution.
- With regard to Part 4 Rules of Procedure relating to Members conduct the Committee discussed the issue of Members standing to speak at Full Council and the issue relating to the new Council Chamber layout in respect of the use of microphones.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the revised Constitution be endorsed and referred to Cabinet and Council for approval and that Cabinet be asked to look into the issue of microphone use in the Council Chamber in connection with Members having to stand to speak when addressing Full Council meetings.

3. PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reminded Members that at their last meeting it was agreed to write to all Parish Councils in the borough seeking nominations for a replacement Parish Council Representative on the Standards Committee.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer now reported that four nominations had been received namely two parish members from Somerton Parish Council and two members from Winterton on Sea Parish Council.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the four nominations received for the vacant Parish Council position on the Standards Committee be the subject of interview by Members on a date to be agreed.

4. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

The Monitoring Officer reminded the Committee that at its meeting of the 27 July 2012 it was agreed to recommend to Council to appoint Mrs Linda Barber as the Independent Person for a one year period only. This period of tenure will shortly come to an end and the Committee was therefore asked to consider agreeing arrangements for a replacement independent person. The Monitoring Officer reminded Members that under the current legislation Mrs Barber would be ineligible to be reappointed as the independent person.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That approval be given to advertise for a replacement independent person in the Great Yarmouth Mercury and on the Borough Council's website, such appointment to be restricted to the candidate either living or working in the borough of Great Yarmouth.
- (ii) That the remuneration for the independent person would be on the same basis as previous namely £50 paid per case considered.
- (iii) That a letter of thanks be sent to Mrs Linda Barber for all her work as the independent person to the Standards Committee over the past year.

5. DEFINED PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATIONS AND HEARINGS

The Chairman had requested that the Standards Committee should have a defined procedure for investigations and hearings that would become a public document.

The Monitoring Officer reported that discussions were currently taking place county wide in order to agree a common procedure.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Monitoring Officer be asked to report further on any agreed procedure to the next meeting.

6. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 10.35 am.