
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16th October, 2018

Present: Councillor June Harrison (in the Chair), Councillors Joyce Plummer (Vice Chair), Kath Pratt and Stewart Eaves

Altham Parish Councillor Rennie Pinder
Independent Person: Patricia Higginbottom

Apologies Jeff Scales

177 Apologies for Absence, Substitutions, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Scales.

Councillor Eaves acted as substitute representative for Councillor Scales.

Councillor Plummer declared a conflict of interest in item 3 – Grant of Dispensations due to her name being on the list of Councillors seeking dispensation to speak and vote on the a number of matters as set out in the report. Councillor Plummer indicated that she would not be speaking or voting on that item.

178 Minutes of Last Meeting 30th January 2017

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Standards Committee held on 30th January, 2017 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved - **That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.**

179 Grant of Dispensations

The Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) submitted a report seeking the granting of dispensations to Hyndburn Councillors Josh Allen, Sara Britcliffe, Andrew Clegg, Marlene Haworth, Michael Miller, Jenny Molineux, Dave Parkins, Bernadette Parkinson and Joyce Plummer for a period of four years to enable them to speak and vote on the following matters (their request forms are attached):-

- An allowance, payment or indemnity given to Members
- Ceremonial honours given to Members
- Setting Council Tax or a precept under the Local Government and Finance Act 1992, as amended from time to time or any superseding legislation
- Setting a local Council Tax reduction scheme for the purposes of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, as amended from time to time or any superseding legislation
- Setting a local scheme for the payment of business rates, including eligibility for rebates and reductions, for the purposes of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, as amended from time to time and any superseding legislation.

A dispensation had already been granted to the remaining 26 Hyndburn Councillors.

Altham Parish Councillors Thomas Fearon, Anthony Hickson, Christine Lingard, Rennie Pinder and Joseph Threlfall had all applied for dispensations to speak and vote in respect of the setting of a precept under the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended from time to time or any superseding legislation. The individually signed request forms were appended to the report.

Dispensations to that affect had already been granted to the remaining serving Altham Parish Councillor with one of the seven seats of the Parish Council being vacant.

Having declared a personal interest in respect of the submitted list of dispensations, Councillor Plummer took no part in the vote on this item.

Resolved

- (1) That, as requested, dispensations be granted to the above named Members of Hyndburn Borough Council to allow them to speak and vote on the issues set out above, the dispensation to expire after a period of four years or earlier if they ceased to be a Member of the Council; and**
- (2) That, as requested, dispensations be granted to the named Altham Parish Councillors, as set out above, to allow them to speak and vote on the setting of a parish precept under the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended from time to time or any superseding legislation. The dispensation to expire after a period of four years or earlier if they ceased to be a Member of Altham Parish Council.**

180 Annual Ombudsman's Letter 2018

The Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) submitted a report relating to the Annual Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO's) letter for 2017/18.

The Local Government Ombudsman had received a low level of complaints about Hyndburn which made it difficult to identify trends from the statistical information provided. The low level of complaints might however, reflect good service delivery and/or a good internal complaint handling process. The letter had not flagged up any areas of concern about either the Council's services or its procedures for dealing with complaints.

The Executive Director reported that in 2017/18 the LGO had received 14 complaints about the Council of which 11 were determined. Attention was drawn to comparisons with 2016/17 figures when 6 complaints were received. Reference was made to the service areas to which complaints had been related most of which were to Planning. She pointed out that Planning did, in general, receive the greatest number of complaints, most of which were related to enforcement or as a result of controversial housing developments. Reference was also made to comparison between the Council's position and that of neighbouring District Councils over the same period. Hyndburn Borough Council had received a comparable number of complaints to its neighbours. She informed the Committee that of the 14 complaints submitted to the Council none had been upheld whereas other Authorities had had at least one complaint upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman. This exercise also indicated no obvious cause for concern.

Resolved

- That the Local Government Ombudsman's letter be welcomed and the report be noted.**

181 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved

- That in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item, when it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, that there would otherwise be disclosure of exempt information within the Paragraph at Schedule 12A of the Act specified at the item.

182 Update on Submission of Complaints

Exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Paragraph 1 – Information relating to any individual

The Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) verbally reported that there were currently no complaints against Councillors. There were no previous complaints requiring action.

Resolved

- That the verbal report be noted.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed