
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 30th November, 2016

Present: Hyndburn Borough Councillors

Councillor June Harrison (in the Chair), Councillors Joyce Plummer (Vice Chair), Kath Pratt and Jeff Scales

Independent Person

Mrs. Patricia Higginbottom

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest and Declarations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

3 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Standards Committee held on 5th October 2015 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) reported that Reverend John Holland had retired and left the area so there were now two independent person vacancies on the Standards Committee.

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

4 Grant of Dispensations

The Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) submitted a report seeking the grant of dispensations to a number of Hyndburn Councillors and one Altham Parish Councillor for a period of four years to enable them to speak and vote on the following matters:-

- 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

The Hyndburn Councillors were Judith Addison, Mohammad Ayub, Noordad Aziz, Jean Battle, Peter Birtcliffe, Stephen Button, Clare Cleary, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad, Bernard Dawson, Tony Dobson, Stewart Eaves, Glen Harrison, June Harrison, Stephanie Haworth, Terry Hurn, Abdul Khan, Gareth Molineux, Ken Moss, Tim O’Kane, Miles Parkinson, Kath Pratt, Jeff Scales and Paddy Short who had all applied individually for dispensation to speak and vote on the above matters. Their request forms were appended to the report.

A dispensation had already been granted to the remaining 11 Hyndburn Borough Councillors.

Altham Parish Councillor John Halstead had applied for dispensation 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 form was appended to the report.

A dispensation to that effect had already been granted to the remaining five serving Altham Parish Councillors. Although there were seven seats in total on the Parish Council, one of the seats was currently vacant.

- Resolved**
- (1) That, as requested, a dispensation 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 Members of the Council; and,**
 - (2) That, as requested, a dispensation be granted to Altham Parish Councillor John Halstead to allow him 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 he ceased to be a Member of Altham Parish Council.**

5 Annual Ombudsman's Letter 2016

The Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) submitted a report relating to the Annual Local Government Ombudsman’s Letter for 2015/16 . The Letter was appended to the report

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 2015/16 the Local Government Ombudsman had received nine complaints about the Council and had determined eight complaints about the Council. Attention was drawn to comparisons with 2014/15 figures. Reference was made to the comparison between the Council’s position and that of neighbouring District Councils over the same period which again did not indicated any obvious cause for concern, with Hyndburn Council receiving a comparable number of complaints to its neighbours.

- Resolved**
- That the Local Government Ombudsman’s Letter be welcomed and the report be noted.**

6 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.

7 Local Assessment of Complaints - Update

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. Two complaints had been received since October 2016 but had not been viable complaints as they related to the Councillors' personal lives and not Council work. 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