

**At a meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on FRIDAY, 29<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2013 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor H. Trueman in the Chair

Councillors Forbes, Marshall, Price, Richardson and Shattock together with Councillors Hepple and Wilkinson (Hetton Town Council).

**Part 1**

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Mr. A. Atkinson and Mrs S. Joseph (Independent Persons).

**Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee**

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> February and 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 (copies circulated) were submitted.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed and signed as correct records.

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Marshall made an open declaration in relation to item 7 on the agenda, the report on Complaint Reference 1/12, that she had had previous knowledge of the background to the complaint, although at the time she had not been a Member of the Council herself. She therefore withdrew from the meeting prior to the consideration of this item.

**DCLG Guidance – Openness and Transparency on Personal Interests**

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (copy circulated) advising Members of Government guidance on openness and transparency on personal interests that had been updated and reissued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in September 2013.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Elaine Waugh, Head of Law and Governance presented the report highlighting that the guidance had been updated to include specific provision regarding trade union membership.

Ms. Waugh outlined the options available as detailed at paragraph 3 of the report as to whether the Committee wished to recommend that Council consider amending the Code of Conduct to require registration of trade union membership. Alternatively, the Code could remain in its current form and for Members to continue to give consideration on a case by case basis to whether the potential appearance of bias or predetermination arises in any matter under consideration and if so, to declare that interest and leave the meeting room.

Consideration having been given to the report and the above options, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the guidance document issued by (DCLG) on openness and transparency on personal interests be noted, and
- ii) no amendment to the Code of Conduct be proposed but that Members continue to be advised to declare any interest in a matter (whether or not that interest also amounts to a DPI) that may give rise to an issue of bias or predetermination at any meeting attended by them and where appropriate, leave the room while the matter is under consideration.

### **Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006**

At the instance of the Chairman it was: -

3. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it contains information relating to individuals and information which is likely to reveal the identity of individuals (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 1).

(Signed) H. TRUEMAN,  
Chairman.

### **Note:-**

The above minutes comprise only those relating to items during which the meeting was open to members of the public.

Additional minutes in respect of further items are included in Part II.