

MINUTE EXTRACT

Cabinet Meeting – 8th October 2015

1. Title of Item/Report

Localism Act 2011 - Review of the Councils Local Standards Arrangements

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that provided details of the latest review of the Council's local standards arrangements.

The Council agreed new standards arrangements, as required by the Localism Act 2011, on 7 March 2012.

Subsequently, Council agreed a new code of conduct for Members on 18 July 2012.

Council agreed that these new arrangements should be reviewed after 12 months of operation.

A review was undertaken, and was the subject of a report to Cabinet and to Council in September 2013. One of the report's recommendations that was agreed by Council was that a further review of the standards arrangements should take place after a further 12 months operation, and that the outcome with any recommendations, should be reported to the Audit Committee, Cabinet and Council.

Details of the most recent review of the Council's standards arrangements were attached to the report.

Members were asked to consider the review report, and subject to such consideration, to recommend it to Council along with the recommendations specified within the covering report.

The Audit Committee considered a similar report at its meeting on the 28 September.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. The report regarding the review of the Council's local standards arrangements be considered; and as the report recommends that,
2. No changes be made to the principles of conduct or the Council's code of conduct for Members;
3. Awareness continues to be maintained, and that appropriate advice, guidance and training continues be provided, in connection with the general principles and the code;
4. The Council's Confidential Information protocol be re-issued and re-circulated to all Members, in order to highlight the arrangements and requirements regarding exempt and confidential information;

5. Copies of the letters (about standards of conduct) previously sent to the Planning Committee be re-circulated to all Members of the Council;
6. Members continue to be reminded of the importance of complying with the law, and the significant risk of not doing so, when using social media, or any other forms of electronic communication.
7. The arrangements for dealing with member misconduct complaints remain unchanged, and as originally approved by Council;
8. All Council Members take appropriate action to ensure that their register of interests details have been submitted and are kept up to date;
9. Regular reminders, advice and guidance continue to be provided to Stockton's Members and to the members of the borough's Town/Parish Councils, regarding the need to submit and keep their registerable interests up to date;
10. The procedures relating to the disclosures of interests at, and withdrawal from the Council's meetings be reaffirmed;
11. Appropriate and timely advice regarding those procedures be made available to all members when required;
12. The documentation (protocol and application form) and procedure regarding dispensation applications and determinations be reaffirmed and re-circulated to all Members;
13. Guidance and/or briefings regarding any aspects of the Council's standards arrangements be provided to individual Members or their Groups if required, on request;
14. The guidance for Members regarding gifts and hospitality be reviewed and re-circulated; and that
15. The Council's standards arrangements be reviewed again during the 2017/18 municipal year.