

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Standards Committee held on  
Friday 15 February 2013 at 10.00 am, in Meeting Room 3,  
King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors B Ayres (Chairman), R Bird, Mrs Z Christopher and A Tyler  
Mr J Stringer (Independent Representative)  
Mr A J Maiden (Parish Representative)  
Nicola Leader, Monitoring Officer

**1 THE LATE COUNCILLOR DAVID JOHNSON**

The Chairman reported the sad death of the Late Councillor David Johnson who was member of the Committee.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs K Mellish and A Wright and Mr R Seppings (Parish Representative)

**3 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the following meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Full Standards Committee

17 May 2012

**4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**5 INTRODUCTION OF INDEPENDENT PERSON TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Chairman invited Mr J Stringer to introduce himself to the Standards Committee.

**6 INTRODUCTION OF THE TWO NON-VOTING PARISH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Chairman invited Mr A J Maiden to introduce himself to the Standards Committee. Unfortunately Mr Seppings was not able to be present at the meeting.

## **7 APPLICATION FOR A DISPENSATION**

The Monitoring Officer advised that last week a statement was issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government clarifying the position on the need for Members to require a dispensation for council tax setting purposes. The statement concluded that it was not a requirement for Members to seek a dispensation in order to participate in discussions or vote on decisions in the council tax setting process.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the report which would have been presented to the Standards Committee last Friday stated that Councillors would require a dispensation to participate in the council tax setting process. Therefore a revised report and been prepared and presented to the Committee. The report dealt with the outstanding issues in relation to dispensations.

The Monitoring Officer explained that as part of the Financial Plan 2012/2016 and Council Tax Resolution which would be considered by full Council on 21 February 2013, Members Allowances would also be considered, and under the new regime, all Councillors would have a disclosable pecuniary interest in the matter.

The Council had delegated powers to the Standards Committee to grant dispensations, where it could be anticipated that the number of Members with a disclosable pecuniary interest would be such as to impede the Council's business.

The Monitoring Officer further explained that the report was seeking authority for her to be able to grant dispensations to those Members who requested it, or in her absence, the Democratic Services Manager, as she envisaged situations where there would not be time to call a Standards Committee to consider those requests. The Monitoring Officer explained that when she had used to power to grant a dispensation, a report on the use of the power would be prepared and submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

Councillor Bird asked for an example of when the Monitoring Officer would need to grant dispensations. In response, the Monitoring Officer explained that there may be a situation when a report is considered by a particular Committee, which contained information where many Councillors considered they had a disclosable pecuniary interest, and given the timescales involved with the publication of the agenda and the actual meeting, there may not be enough time to arrange a Standards Committee meeting. She would in the first instance seek to call a Standards Committee meeting but if that was not possible then she would require delegated powers to be able to grant the dispensation.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That, a dispensation is granted to all Members who make a request for a dispensation to the Monitoring Officer or in her absence the Democratic Services Manager, in relation to matters relating to

an allowance or payment given to Members for a period of four years from the date of this decision

(2) That the power to grant dispensations pursuant to s.33 of the Localism Act 2011, be delegated to the Monitoring Officer and that where the Monitoring Officer has used the power to grant a dispensation, a report on the use of the power be prepared and submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

**The meeting closed at 10.10 am**