

# **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **Minutes**

**FRIDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: Councillor G Bond (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, B Cawley, B Emery, K J Jackson,  
Mr H Mawdsley, L Page, P Taylor and P Wilkinson and Mr H  
Mawdsley

IN ATTENDANCE: M Trillo Executive Director (Governance &  
Commissioning) & Deputy Chief Executive  
L Vernon Head of Democratic Services  
B Haywood Head of Development Services  
Lomas Head of Customer Services

APOLOGIES: Councillor B Hughes & Mr. P Rushworth

41 **URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS, IF ANY (24 HOURS NOTICE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE CHAIRMAN).**

There were no urgent items.

42 **TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 25 March 2021 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY:**

There were no declarations made.

44 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL LETTER**

Mark Trillo – Executive Director and Monitoring Officer – advised members on the content of the Ombudsman’s Annual Letter for the period April 2020 to March 2021.

The letter detailed all 5 complaints which had been referred to them. There had been no findings of maladministration or any further action in any instance.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be **NOTED**.

45 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS**

Following a recent meeting of the Council’s Constitution Review Working Party when the Planning Applications Scheme of Delegations was discussed, Mark Trillo

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confirmed that it was the duty of this committee to consider the implications of any changes from an ethical point of view.

Head of Development Services Ben Haywood introduced the proposed changes in the light of the Council's relatively low rate of delegated decisions (currently 74%) when measured against the national average of 95%. The aim was to achieve a balance between efficiency and democracy and it was therefore essential to have a good scheme of delegation.

Member call-ins were shown to be a significant proportion of applications dealt with at committee and the proposed amendments to the scheme of delegation were appended to the report. It was proposed that the Panel which met to consider an application to be called-in should comprise of:- the Head of Development Services, the Chair & Vice-Chair of the Planning Applications Committee, the Cabinet member with responsibility for planning and the member calling the application in. Members felt that this would result in at least 3 of the 5 people on the Panel being Conservative councillors. Call-ins were also required to be submitted during the Statutory Consultation Period and members felt that this was restrictive.

It was proposed by Councillor Jackson and seconded by Councillor Wilkinson that the wording of (i) regarding the attendance at the Panel of the member calling the application in be amended to remove the discretion of the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee. At a vote, the motion was carried.

It was proposed by Councillor Jackson and seconded by Councillor Taylor that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Applications Committee should be elected annually by the members of that Committee. This matter was to be further discussed at the Constitution Review Working Party. At a vote, the motion was carried.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilkinson that member call-ins should be allowed up until 2 weeks prior to the determination date for the application. At a vote, the motion was carried.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee recommends to the Constitution Review Working Party that the revised planning delegations as appended to the report with amendments as shown above.

### 46 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 100 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.

### 47 **TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

Members considered the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2021.

48 **STANDARDS COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT**

Members considered a report on complaints made under the Code of Conduct in the period since the Committee last met.

The meeting closed at 11.07 am

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date