

**Minutes of a meeting of the Mid Sussex District Council  
Standards Committee held on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012  
from 7.00 pm to 7.54 pm.**

**Present:-**

Town Cllr Christopher Ash-  
Edwards  
Parish Cllr William Blunden  
Cllr Jack Callaghan

Ian Church  
Parish Cllr Jenny Forbes\*  
Cllr Denis Jones  
Cllr Andrew Lea  
Andrew Lewis

Cllr Gordon Marples  
Sir Roger Sands  
Cllr Susan Seward\*  
Trevor Swainson

\* Absent

**19. SUBSTITUTES**

None.

**20. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Jenny Forbes and Susan Seward.

**21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Sir Roger Sands disclosed that he may have a personal interest in item 5 on the agenda as he understood he would be eligible to apply for appointment to the new independent role, and might decide to do so.

**22. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**23. SUGGESTED NEW CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS AND THE APPOINTMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT MEMBERS REQUIRED UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report and referred Members to the draft Code of Conduct, shown as Appendix 1 to the report, and explained that some of the paragraph numbers had not been updated in accordance with the new regulations. He recommended that Mid Sussex should go along with East and West Sussex County Councils, and other District Councils in the area, in adopting this comprehensive Code of Conduct, similar to the one currently in use, rather than the more shortened version being prepared by the Local Government Association. If the Committee agreed with this recommendation, the draft Code would then go before full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> May for final adoption. The Monitoring Officer added that it would be necessary for all Town and Parish Councils to adopt a Code of Conduct before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012.

He referred to the appointment arrangements for Independent Members required under the Localism Act, and explained that the Standards Committee will comprise 10 members, comprising six District members and four Town/Parish members. Independent members, under the new legislation, cannot serve on the Committee as co-opted members, but can act as mediators to both the Monitoring Officer and those

in receipt of a complaint and to those who make a complaint. He also explained the process proposed for advertising and filling these two posts.

The Committee made a number of observations and raised a number of points relating to the content of the draft Code to which the Monitoring Officer responded; he also said that he would raise the points with his colleagues in the other Sussex councils before the draft Code was finalised.

The Committee noted the process proposed for the appointment of Independent members. A Member proposed that the membership of the Interview Panel should consist entirely of backbench Council members; but after discussion this amendment to the paper was defeated by four votes to two, with four abstentions.

A Member supported the recommendation in the paper and the Chairman took Members to the recommendation.

### **RESOLVED**

That:-

- (1) the Members Code of Conduct in the style of Appendix 1 to the report be recommended for use by all District Members from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012; and
- (2) two independent members be appointed in May 2012 with a term of office of four years starting from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012.

### **24. THANKS**

Ian Church, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Chairman, Sir Roger Sands, for the excellent job he had carried out during his term as Chairman of the Committee.

Chairman