

Standards and Governance (Assessments Sub-Committee)

Tuesday, 13th December, 2011
at 1.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING

Conference Room 3 - Civic Centre

Members

Councillor Burke
Councillor Matthews
Councillor Turner

Independent Members

Mr Brian Hooper (Chair)

Contacts:-

Head of Service:-

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Services

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PUBLIC INFORMATION

Role of the Standards and Governance (Assessments Sub-Committee)

The Sub-Committee has responsibility to hear and determine written allegations that a member or co-opted member (or former member or co-opted member) of the Council has failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members in accordance with the provisions of the local Government Act 2000 or any amendment or re-enacted thereof.

The Sub-Committee is chaired by an Independent Member (with voting rights, who is not a Councillor or an Officer of the Council) and includes three Councillor members.

Public Representations

Save where an Item has been resolved to be confidential in accordance with the Council's Constitution, at the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may address the meeting about any report on the agenda for the meeting in which they have a relevant interest.

Southampton City Council's Seven Priorities

- More jobs for local people
- More local people who are well educated and skilled
- A better and safer place in which to live and invest
- Better protection for children and young people
- Support for the most vulnerable people and families
- Reducing health inequalities
- Reshaping the Council for the future

Smoking policy – the Council operates a no-smoking policy in all civic buildings.

Mobile Telephones – please turn off your mobile telephone whilst in the meeting.

Fire Procedure – in the event of a fire or other emergency a continuous alarm will sound and you will be advised by Council officers what action to take.

Access – access is available for disabled people. Please contact the Democratic Support Officer who will help to make any necessary arrangements.

Dates of Meetings: Municipal Year 2011/12

Meetings of the Sub-Committee are held as and when required.

CONDUCT OF MEETING

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the Sub-Committee are contained in the Council's Constitution.

Business to be discussed

Only those items listed on the attached agenda may be considered at this meeting.

Rules of Procedure

The meeting is governed by the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

Quorum

The minimum number of appointed Members required to be in attendance to hold the meeting is 3 (including 1 Independent Member).

Disclosure of Interests

Members are required to disclose, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, **both** the existence **and** nature of any "personal" or "prejudicial" interests they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this Agenda.

Personal Interests

A Member must regard himself or herself as having a personal interest in any matter

- (i) if the matter relates to an interest in the Member's register of interests; or
- (ii) if a decision upon a matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting to a greater extent than other Council Tax payers, ratepayers and inhabitants of the District, the wellbeing or financial position of himself or herself, a relative or a friend or:-
 - (a) any employment or business carried on by such person;
 - (b) any person who employs or has appointed such a person, any firm in which such a person is a partner, or any company of which such a person is a director;
 - (c) any corporate body in which such a person has a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or
 - (d) any body listed in Article 14(a) to (e) in which such a person holds a position of general control or management.

A Member must disclose a personal interest.

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Prejudicial Interests

Having identified a personal interest, a Member must consider whether a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably think that the interest was so significant and particular that it could prejudice that Member's judgement of the public interest. If that is the case, the interest must be regarded as "prejudicial" and the Member must disclose the interest and withdraw from the meeting room during discussion on the item.

It should be noted that a prejudicial interest may apply to part or the whole of an item.

Where there are a series of inter-related financial or resource matters, with a limited resource available, under consideration a prejudicial interest in one matter relating to that resource may lead to a member being excluded from considering the other matters relating to that same limited resource.

There are some limited exceptions.

Note: Members are encouraged to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or his staff in Democratic Services if they have any problems or concerns in relation to the above.

Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
- respect for human rights;
- a presumption in favour of openness, accountability and transparency;
- setting out what options have been considered;
- setting out reasons for the decision; and
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

In exercising discretion, the decision maker must:

- understand the law that regulates the decision making power and gives effect to it. The decision-maker must direct itself properly in law;
- take into account all relevant matters (those matters which the law requires the authority as a matter of legal obligation to take into account);
- leave out of account irrelevant considerations;
- act for a proper purpose, exercising its powers for the public good;
- not reach a decision which no authority acting reasonably could reach, (also known as the "rationality" or "taking leave of your senses" principle);
- comply with the rule that local government finance is to be conducted on an annual basis. Save to the extent authorised by Parliament, 'live now, pay later' and forward funding are unlawful; and
- act with procedural propriety in accordance with the rules of fairness.

AGENDA

Agendas and papers are now available online at
www.southampton.gov.uk/council/meeting-papers

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, and the Council's Code of Conduct adopted on 16th May 2007, Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter included on the agenda for this meeting.

NOTE: Members are required, where applicable, to complete the appropriate form recording details of any such interests and hand it to the Democratic Support Officer prior to the commencement of this meeting.

3 STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

4 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Chair to move that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of item 6 by virtue of category 7(c) (deliberations of the Standards Committee or a Sub-Committee or Panel established under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000) and paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules as contained in the Council's Constitution. It is not in the public interest to disclose this information because doing so would prejudice the parties' and the public interest to be able to deal with complaints against Members in a fair and robust way in accordance with the legislation.

5 COMPLAINT AGAINST A FORMER COUNCILLOR

To consider a confidential report of the Acting Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services requesting the Sub-Committee to determine whether or not any action should be taken on the above complaint, either as an investigation or some other action. The Sub-Committee will make no finding of fact at this stage, attached.

Monday, 5 December 2011

Head of Legal and Democratic Services