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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

11 July 2011

Present:-

Councillors Mrs Burke, Cairns, Taylor J and Wemyss

Mr. D.J. Burns – Independent Member
Mr. D. Wood MBE – Independent Member
Mr W Murray – Staffordshire Parish Councils Association

Mr. E. Durber – Audley Parish Council
Mr G L E Locke – Kidsgrove Town Council
Mr G Sedgley – Loggerheads Parish Council

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Hambleton, Mr Y Mir, Mr M Rowley and Mr T Sproston.

160. * **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

Resolved:- That Mr D J Burns be appointed as the Chair of the Standards Committee for the 2011/12 municipal year and that the Committee's thanks for the work carried out by him over the previous 12 months be placed on record.

Mr Burns in the Chair

161. * **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 17 January 2011 be approved as a correct record.

162. * **ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW STANDARDS COMMITTEE FOLLOWING THE ENACTMENT OF THE LOCALISM BILL (527/11)**

Arising out of consideration of the minutes of the last meeting, a Member asked what progress had been made on the appointment of a Working Group to consider the membership and terms of reference for a new Standards Committee following the expected enactment of the Localism Bill and resultant abolition of the existing Standards regime.

The officers indicated that delays in the setting up of the Working Group had occurred due to availability of staff resources and to await the outcome of the May local elections and subsequent appointment of new Members to serve on the Standards Committee.

Resolved:- (a) That it be recommended to the Council that a Working Group consisting of 5 members, drawn from the existing membership of the Standards Committee, be appointed as follows:

Conservative Group – 1 nomination

Liberal Democrat Group – 1 nomination
Labour Group – 1 nomination.

The remaining 2 places would be filled by the Chair of the Standards Committee (Mr. D. Burns), and one other Independent Member.

163. * **LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – ANNUAL LETTER FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2011 AND ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a report informing Members of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter for the year ended 31 March 2011.

It was reported that the average response time to enquiries was 43 days and that in respect of one of the enquiries, a holding response had been sent to the Local Government Ombudsman advising them that more time was needed in order to respond fully. However, holding responses were not counted for the purposes of response times and in future the Council was to aim to respond within 10-15 working days.

Resolved:- That the information be received and the actions proposed be noted.

D J BURNS
Chair