

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Ethics Committee held at 10.00 am on Thursday,
17 September 2015

Present:

Members: Councillor J Clifford (Chair)
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor D Gannon

Employees (by Directorate): C Bradford, Resources Directorate
G Paddan, Resources Directorate
A West, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillors A Andrews and J McNicholas
K Sloan – Independent Person

Public Business

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2015 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

11. Code of Conduct Update

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Resources, which provided an update to members of the Ethics Committee on national issues in relation to the ethical behaviour of elected members and the local position in Coventry with regard to Code of Conduct issues.

The report noted the complaints received relating to members of Coventry City Council. There had been three new complaints since the last meeting of this Committee. All complaints had been handled in accordance with the agreed Complaints Protocol. No findings had been made by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to members of Coventry City Council. No complaints had been received by the Monitoring Officer in respect of Allesley or Keresley Parish Councils.

Members raised concerns regarding social media and the importance of separating private and public calls/emails on Council's communication equipment.

RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee:

- 1. Notes the cases determined nationally**
- 2. Authorises officer to bring the national cases in relation to the ethical behaviour of elected members to members' attention.**

12. **Six Monthly Review of Members' Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Resources, which set out details of declarations of gifts and hospitality made by members since the Committee last reviewed these at its meeting on 10 March 2015. The declarations attached to the report were considered.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13. **Six Monthly Review of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Resources, which set out the entries in the register for the period 1 January to 30 June 2015. It also included an extract from the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees relating to gifts and hospitality.

At present the Chief Executive's Office and each Directorate maintain their own separate register of gifts and hospitality. Each register varied in terms of how much information was recorded. All registers are maintained by the relevant Director's office apart from Public Health which has arrangements to log gifts and hospitality received on the register maintained by the Chief Executive's Office. There is a separate register for the Chief Executive to record his gifts and hospitality. It was noted that People Directorate had no entries in their register for the period being considered.

RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee:

1. **Notes the report**
2. **That a standardised recording table be organised for unified entries by Employees**
3. **Guidance on completing and maintaining the register to be circulated to employees/managers**

14. **Work Programme 2015-16**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Resources which suggested areas of work for Ethics Committee for the Municipal year 2015-16.

The Committee were advised that The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) had been working with a number of organisations to develop a Code of Ethics which is intended to be applicable to all those who hold senior management roles in local public services led by locally elected politicians. The consultation period ended in June 2015. It was suggested this code be considered at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the work programme be updated to include the new code of ethics for consideration at a future meeting – December 2015/March 2016.

15. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 10.43)