

**MINUTES****STANDARDS COMMITTEE****10:00 to 10:40****17 July 2015**

Present: Councillor Lubbock (in the chair following election),  
Councillors Bogelein, Haynes and Manning and Mr C Thrower  
(co-opted member)

Apologies Mr A Roy (independent person) and Peter Franzen (co-opted  
member)

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Lubbock as chair for the ensuing civic year.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Manning as vice chair for the ensuing civic year.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on  
18 July, 2014.

**5. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER 2015**

Hugh Ferguson, monitoring officer, introduced himself and the report. He said that he was appointed monitoring officer in November 2013. He said that he had over 20 years' experience as a solicitor and had worked for Norfolk County Council for seven years and he currently headed up the nplaw's property law team.

He had regular contact with senior officers at the council and also with other monitoring officers around the county. He was pleased to say that the standards of behaviour at Norwich City Council were very good and he had therefore had little involvement with councillors. Occasionally queries were raised with him by other officers but nothing had required anything other than informal discussion. He said that if an issue was raised with him he would follow the laid down criteria and in doing so his aim was to, wherever possible, deal with things quietly and informally to diffuse situations before they developed into anything serious.

He had met with Alistair Roy, the council's independent person and he would discuss matters with him as and when required. He reminded members that the independent person was a formal appointment the council was required to make. This was to provide an independent input into matters before deciding whether they should move on to formal investigation. Andy Emms said that the council also had a reserve independent person but that Fiona Anthony had recently resigned from that position as she had obtained employment with NPLaw and considered this might be a conflict of interest. Hugh Ferguson said that he and Anton Bull, executive head of business relationship management and democracy, would be discussing how to fill that vacancy.

A member queried when the person who was the subject of a complaint would be informed of that. Hugh Ferguson said that if the matter was dealt with informally and possibly after discussion with the independent person, he decided that there was no issue to even discuss, then the person would not necessarily be informed as there was no need to concern them about a matter which he considered was not a code of conduct issue i.e. part of the "cut and thrust" of political debate. However, if the matter did progress beyond that then he would follow the processes laid out in the constitution on the arrangements for dealing with standards allegations (Appendix 13a) and the adopted criteria for deciding whether a matter should be referred to formal investigation (Appendix 13b). These clearly set out when interested parties should be involved and this would be strictly adhered to.

He welcomed the fact that code of conduct issues were covered in induction training for new councillors and he understood it was also part of the training and development programme. Andy Emms, the democratic services manager, said that the councillor development group was considering the 2015/16 training at a meeting the following week.

**RESOLVED** to –

- (1) note the monitoring officers draft annual report for 2015;
- (2) ask the councillors' development group to include code of conduct training in the 2015-16 training and development programme, particularly for the benefit of newly elected councillors.

CHAIR