STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2020


Officers: Sarah Pemberton (Director of Corporate Services and Commercial Strategy (Monitoring Officer)), Clinton Boyce (Solicitor), Stephanie Shaw (Electoral and Democratic Services Manager), Clive Willoughby (Democratic Services Officer) and Rose Blaney (Electoral and Democratic Services Officer).

SEC 20/1 Roll Call and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Graham Calvin and Steven Morgan.

SEC 20/2 Appointment of Chair

Councillor Joan Hully was proposed by Councillor Jackie Bowman and seconded by Councillor Doug Wilson.

A vote was then taken by way of a roll call.

On a vote of 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions, it was therefore:-

RESOLVED – That Councillor Joan Hully be appointed Chair of the Standards and Ethics Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

Councillor Joan Hully took the Chair at this point in the meeting.

SEC 20/3 Appointment of Deputy Chair

Councillor Russell Studholme was proposed by Councillor Doug Wilson and seconded by Councillor Jackie Bowman.

A vote was then taken by way of a roll call.

On a vote of 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions, it was therefore:-

RESOLVED – That Councillor Russell Studholme be appointed Deputy Chair for the Standards and Ethics Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21.
SEC 20/4  **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Joan Hully declared a non-pecuniary interest due to knowing a number of Parton Parish Council’s Councillors.

Councillor Jackie Bowman declared a non-pecuniary interest due to having connections with Parton Parish Council in her role as Ward Councillor for Distington, Lowca and Parton.

SEC 20/5  **Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 February 2020**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2020.

A vote was then taken by way of a roll call.

On a vote of 4 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention, it was therefore:-

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair as soon as practicable.

SEC 20/6  **Model Code of Conduct**

The Director of Corporate Resources and Commercial Strategy (and Monitoring Officer) introduced the Local Government Association’s (LGA) draft Model Code of Conduct to committee.

Members were advised that the purpose of the Code of Conduct was to assist councillors in modelling the behaviour that was expected of them, and to set out the type of conduct against which appropriate action may be taken. It sets out the conduct expected of all members and a minimum set of obligations relating to conduct. The overarching aim was to create and maintain public confidence in the role of the member and local government.

It was stated that the LGA’s consultation period with Local Authorities on the draft Model Code of Conduct would run until 17 August and Members were invited to make comments to the Monitoring Officer by no later than Friday 24 July 2020.

During the discussion that followed, Members main concern was clarification of when a Councillor was acting in that capacity.
A vote was then taken by way of a roll call.

On a vote of 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions, it was therefore:-

**RESOLVED – That**

a) the Model Code of Conduct report be noted,  

and

b) Any further Members’ comments be made to the Monitoring Officer by no later than Friday 24 July 2020.

**SEC 20/7 Petition Regarding Parton Parish Council**

The Director of Corporate Resources and Commercial Strategy (and Monitoring Officer) reminded Members that two petitions regarding Parton Parish Council had been presented to Full Council on 10 February 2020 and it was agreed that responsibility for their consideration be delegated to the Standards and Ethics Committee.

Members were advised that the Original Petition read:

“We, the undersigned, have no confidence in Parton Parish Council and petition Copeland Borough Council to dissolve Parton Parish Council and hold fresh elections.”

and the Counter Petition read:

“We the undersigned oppose the terms of the petition submitted to Copeland Borough Council relating to Parton Parish Council. We fully support the present group of Councillors and continue to do so to make Parton Village great again. This petition to show our support and need for our Parish Council to remain, and for Parton’s voice to be heard through its democracy. If our name was on any prior petition we wish for it to be removed now the facts are becoming highly prevalent and wish for the Borough councils Solicitor to take this into consideration”

It was noted that the petition organisers had been invited to this meeting, but had declined and submitted their apologies.

The Director of Corporate Resources and Commercial Strategy (and Monitoring Officer) advised that eight representations had been received, and each was read out in full.
All committee members then gave their views and comments, followed by a debate and suggestions on how the situation in Parton could best be improved.

A vote was then taken by way of a roll call.

On a vote of 5 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions, it was therefore:-

RESOLVED – That
a) the petition and counter petition regarding Parton Parish Council be noted, and
b) no further action be taken on the petitions and that the Parish Council, aware of the issues it faces, work with the new Parish Clerk that has been appointed, to ensure that improvements, particularly around administration and conduct, are made quickly.

The Meeting closed at 3.05 pm

Chair