

Standards Committee
4 July 2016

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on Monday 4 July 2016 at 6.30 pm in the Conference Room, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City

PRESENT: Councillors J Dean (Chairman)

S Markiewicz and S Roberts

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (M.Saminaden)

PRESENT: Director (Governance) and Monitoring Officer (B.Baldock)
Principal Governance Officer (I.Colyer)
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN:

Councillor J.Dean was appointed Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17 at the Annual Council Meeting on 23 May 2016.

2. APOLOGIES:

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B.Fitzsimon.

3. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting on 30 November 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000:

The Director (Governance) and Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that the report which the Council had received following the tri-annual inspection by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioners would be circulated to Members.

5. DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/16:

Report of the Chief Executive presenting the Draft Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2015/16 compiled in accordance with the best practice set out in the CIPFA / SOLACE Guidance Framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government".

The Committee noted that the Governance Group had agreed that, following the review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework including the system of internal control, there was one significant governance issue to be raised in this Annual Governance Statement.

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A Group of Property Search companies were seeking to claim refunds of fees paid to the Council to access land charges data. Negotiations had taken place to settle these claims. The Council had now settled all existing claims, but the outstanding interest and costs of those claims had not yet been settled. A range of likely values of what the outstanding interests and costs had been formulated, but it was too early to confirm sums. It still remained possible that additional claimants might come forward to submit claims for refunds, but none have been intimated at present.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Draft Annual Governance Statement, which would also be presented to and considered by the Audit Committee on 25 July 2016, be approved.
- (2) That the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make any subsequent amendments to the Draft Annual Governance Statement necessitated by the comments made by the Audit Committee.
- (3) That the Statement be certificated by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

Meeting ended at 6.45 pm
GS