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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Friday, 7 August 2009

Present:

Alex Nuttall (Chair)

Councillors

C Blakeley

C Meaden

K Hayes

A Bridson

6 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Resolved – That Mr Alex Nuttall be appointed Chair of this meeting.

7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were. No such declarations were made.

8 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee was asked to consider whether the meeting should be conducted in private. Having applied the public interest test, the Committee decided that the release of the documentation outweighed any argument that it be withheld.

9 COMPLAINT 2008/2

The Committee considered the final report of the independent Investigating Officer appointed to consider the alleged conduct of Councillor James Keeley during and after a meeting of the Liscard and Egremont Partnership held on 29 July 2008, in that he failed to treat others with respect and brought his office or authority into disrepute.

Having been advised that the Committee was required to decide whether, based on the evidence presented, that it agreed or otherwise with the findings of the Investigating Officer, Members proceeded to consider the evidence presented and the conclusions subsequently drawn by the Investigating Officer that Councillor Keeley did not fail to comply with the code of conduct after the partnership meeting.

Members expressed their concerns regarding the delay in bringing this matter to the Committee for determination and asked for a report to the next meeting covering resource issues, joint arrangements with other public bodies for the investigation of complaints, and guideline targets to improve the efficiency of the complaints process.

Resolved –

(1) That the findings of the Investigating Officer, that Councillor Keeley did not fail to comply with the provisions of paragraphs 3(1) and 5 of the Council's Code of conduct be accepted.

(2) That this Committee's reservations regarding the delay in dealing with complaints be referred to the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, together with the request for a further report to the next meeting on ways of improving the current system.