



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.
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Minutes of a meeting of the **CONDUCT COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham at 7.00 pm on **TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2016**.

PRESENT:	Mr A Stewart	Rutland County Council (Chairman)
	Mr K Bool	Rutland County Council
	Mr R Clifton	Rutland County Council
	Mr T King	Rutland County Council
	Mr M Oxley	Rutland County Council
	Mr S Aley	Parish Council Representative
	Mr I Shatford	Independent Person
Officers present:	Mrs N Brown	Coordinator – Corporate Support Team
	Mrs D Mogg	Monitoring Officer
Apologies:	Mr G Grimes	Independent Person

232 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr G Grimes.

233 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any disclosable interests under the Code of Conduct and the nature of those interests and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

No such declarations were received.

234 MINUTES

The minutes of the Conduct Committee meeting held on 16 February 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

235 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Notice had been given to present a deputation, this was withdrawn by the Chairman as the applicant was not present at the meeting.

No other petitions, deputation or questions had been received in relation to items listed on the agenda for this meeting.

236 TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED

- a) The terms of reference, number of places and voting places, membership and dates of meetings were **NOTED** by the Committee.

237 APPOINTMENT OF TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Report No. 161/2016 was received from the Monitoring Officer.

The Monitoring Officer, Mrs D Mogg, introduced the report the purpose of which was to consider and endorse the appointment of Councillor Adam Lowe as a Parish Council representative on the Conduct Committee prior to approval by Full Council on 12 September 2016.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- i) The Monitoring Officer noted Councillor Crombie's (Uppingham Town Council) contribution to the Committee as Town Council Representative;
- ii) Each of the 3 Town Councillors that came before the selection panel were asked a series of questions intended to draw out an understanding of the underlying principles of the ethical standards expected of Councillors and the role of the Conduct Committee. The panel members scored each answer independently; each panel member then collated the scores and only then were the results shared with the other panel members. The outcome was that each panel member had independently scored Councillor Lowe as the highest and therefore preferred candidate;
- iii) Members were disappointed that more Town Councillors did not come forward and felt that this could be addressed by speaking to the relevant Town Councils regarding the way in which Members can be nominated when such vacancies occur;
- iv) It was confirmed that there had been a significant number of complaints in recent months originating from Oakham Town Council, some of these complaints were still being investigated, whilst others had not been significantly serious to warrant further action. Some Councillors on the Committee felt that they were unable to endorse the appointment as they were aware of the complaints that had been put forward;
- v) The selection panel were not aware of any determination against Councillor Lowe that would justify diverting from the outcome of the selection process described above;
- vi) Having a representative from Oakham Town Council could be positive for the Conduct Committee. Should the Town Council Representative be conflicted in any matter coming before the Committee he would be required to declare this and would not take part in this part of the meeting in the usual way; and
- vii) A review of the selection process may be appropriate should Members feel unable to support the decision of the selection panel.

RESOLVED

The Conduct Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** the appointment of Councillor Adam Lowe of Oakham Town Council to the Conduct Committee.

The recommendation was approved by a vote of 3 members in favour and 3 members abstaining.

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In accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule 11, paragraph 2 – Recording of Votes - Mr Gale requested that his abstention from voting for this recommendation be recorded.

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238 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONDUCT COMMITTEE

Report No. 171/2016 was received from the Monitoring Officer.

The Monitoring Officer, Mrs D Mogg, introduced the report the purpose of which was to inform the Committee of the work associated with the Code of Conduct during 2015/16 and the work planned for 2016/17.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- i) The register of interests for all Parish/Town and County Councillors had been received and they were all published on the Website;
- ii) Procedures had been agreed for dealing with complaints regarding breach of the Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer would be reviewing these procedures and would bring a report back to the Committee in March 2017;
- iii) The Monitoring Officer requested that the Committee note the contribution and work of the Independent Persons who work closely with Officers dealing with any complaints and give their time on a voluntary basis;
- iv) The Monitoring Officer aims to resolve complaints informally in line with the approved procedures in order to avoid excessive costs;
- v) Working towards offering training and guidance to Clerks around Governance aspects in the creation of Neighbourhood Plans;
- vi) Members were asked to consider whether the report as presented provided sufficient information, or whether in the interests of transparency there should be more detail including the nature of the complaint and the name of the Councillor involved. Members were of the view that the Monitoring Officer should use her discretion in order to decide when the nature of the complaint justified the publication of more specific details; and
- vii) It was proposed that future annual reports should include details of the cost of external investigations and cost of Rutland County Council Staff time in dealing with complaints, the Committee were in approval of this proposal.

RESOLVED

- 1) The Committee **NOTED** the content of the Report; and

- 2) The Committee **APPROVED** the improvements to future annual reports listed above; in particular the inclusion of details of cost to the Council in dealing with complaints.

239 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

No other items of urgent business had been notified to the Chairman.

240 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7 March 2017

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.04 pm.

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