



COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

WEDNESDAY, 25TH JUNE 2014
ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Alastair Ross (Chairperson)
Ms Anna Lo (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Cathal Boylan
Ms Paula Bradley
Mr Colum Eastwood
Mr Fra McCann
Mr Ian McCrea

In Attendance: Mr Paul Gill (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)

Apologies: Mr Declan McAleer
Mrs Sandra Overend
Mr Mervyn Storey

The meeting commenced at 1.31pm in closed session.

Chairperson's Introduction

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the meeting should commence in closed session.

The Chairperson welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr McAleer, Mrs Overend and Mr Storey.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson reminded Members of their obligation to declare any relevant financial or other interests before and during each Committee meeting.

No interests were declared.

3. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2014

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Report from the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards into the conduct of a Member

6. Annual Report of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards

The Committee agreed to deal with these two items together for convenience of presentation.

Members noted a Clerk's paper and a report from the Commissioner for Standards in relation to the conduct of a Member.

Members noted the Clerk's paper and the Annual Report of the Commissioner for Standards

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Douglas Bain, the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards, to the meeting, and invited him to brief the Committee on his report into the conduct of a Member.

Mr Bain briefed the Committee on his report and answered members' questions.

The Chairperson then invited the Commissioner to brief the Committee on his Annual Report.

Mr Bain briefed the Committee and answered members' questions.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Bain for attending the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Commissioner's Annual Report be published to the Committee webpage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed with the conclusion of the Commissioner that the Member had not breached the Code of Conduct.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk shall prepare a draft report for the Committee's consideration at its next meeting.

The Chairperson reminded members that the Committee's decision should not be disclosed until the report is published.

2.04pm: Mr Agnew and Mr Eastwood left the meeting

7. Review of the Code of Conduct

The Chairperson referred members to the Clerk's Paper at 7.1, to the summary of submissions at 7.2 and to the Approved Judgment in the case of Heesom v Public Service Ombudsman for Wales at 7.3.

The Clerk briefed the Committee.

The Chairperson asked whether the Committee would like any further briefings or advice before proceeding to make decisions on the content of the new Code.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should request legal advice on the implications for the review of the Judgment in Heesom v. Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should contact the Independent Financial Review Panel in relation to the review.

Agreed: The Committee considered a summary table of responses to its issues paper and agreed that the Clerk should, over the summer recess period, commission any other research or legal advice relevant to the review.

8. Any other business

No items were raised.

9. Time, date and place of next meeting

The Chairperson advised Members that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday 2nd July 2014 at 1.30pm, room number 106.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 2.17 pm

Mr Alastair Ross MLA

Chairperson, Committee on Standards and Privileges

2nd July 2014