

MINUTES of the **WEST SUFFOLK JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held at the District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall on Monday 3 March 2014 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Forest Heath District Council

E Stewart (Vice-Chairman)

R Dicker

Mrs C F J Lynch

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

R Redhead (Chairman)

B Cockle

J Thorndyke

Also in attendance:

J Bowes, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

S Turner, FHDC Cabinet Officer/Committee Administrator

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

SUBSTITUTES

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

924. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

925. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2013 were accepted by the Committee as an accurate record, with 5 voting for the motion and with 1 abstention, and signed by the Chairman.

926. **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS (REPORT NO JST14/005)**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented this report which explained that, at its meeting on 16 December 2013, the Joint Committee had agreed in principle, that West Suffolk should recruit its own Independent Persons (IPs) and approved an outline timetable for this process.

This report provided further detail on the process and its implications and sought authority to take the necessary steps.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services also explained that it had been confirmed that the appointment of the original Independent Persons for both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council would terminate on 30 June 2014, so there would be no liability for further payments after that date.

The Joint Committee were also being asked to consider what payment should be offered to the new Independent Persons. The present amount was a retainer of £300 per annum, plus payments of £50 on each occasion that the Independent Person considered a report following investigation.

Paragraph 4.3 of the report contained further detail with regard to the timetable for the appointment of the new Independent Persons, with the appointments being confirmed by both full Councils on 30 June 2014 (St Edmundsbury Borough Council) and 16 July 2014 (Forest Heath District Council).

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The recruitment of two Independent Persons proceed in accordance with the steps set out in paragraph 4.3 of Report No JST14/005, subject to the following additions:-
 - (a) The Independent Persons continue to be paid a retainer of £300 per annum, plus payments of £50 on each occasion that the Independent Person considered a report following investigation.
 - (b) The Independent Persons to be entitled to receive reimbursement of petrol costs and, if applicable, entitlement to receive a carers allowance.
 - (c) Members of the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee to be informed of the names of the candidates who had applied for the position of Independent Persons and be invited to make comment.
2. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee, be authorised to select a short-list of candidates for interview.
3. A further report on the candidates recommended for appointment be brought to the next meeting of the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee on 16 June 2014.

927. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Operation of the Standards Regime (Verbal)

Members of the Joint Committee further discussed their concerns regarding the inadequacies of the current Standards Regime. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that she would again raise these concerns at the next meeting of the Suffolk Monitoring Officers.

Depending on the outcome of the discussions at the meeting of the Monitoring Officers, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, would liaise with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Committee, to see whether a further report was required to be presented to the next meeting on 16 June 2014.

The meeting closed at 6.42 pm.