

Minutes of the meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 6 July 2016 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor B W Butcher

Councillors: S M Le Chevalier
B Gardner
K Mills

Officers: Corporate Complaints and Resilience Officer
Democratic Support Officer

25 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S S Chandler, M R Eddy and P J Hawkins.

26 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillor B Gardner had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor M R Eddy.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

28 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 January 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29 COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Committee received the report of the Corporate Complaints and Resilience Officer (CCRO) on formal complaints received by the Council for the period 1 January to 30 June 2016. Eight complaints had been investigated at stage two of the Council's complaints procedure and two upheld. A further eight had been investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) who had upheld none of the complaints.

Comparing year-on-year figures, the CCRO advised that there had been a reduction in the number of complaints, from 138 in 2014/15 to 106 in 2015/16. Referring to the ward breakdown, it was clarified that the nine complaints for Little Stour and Ashstone ward received in 2015/16 included four about the de-listing of The Red Lion as an Asset of Community Value. With regards to Castle ward, three of the ten complaints received in 2015/16 had been from the same person in respect of Dolphin House. As a whole, no trends had emerged.

In response to Councillor B Gardner, the CCRO clarified that only a few complaints investigated by the LGO were upheld. Many complaints related to Planning matters and arose because complainants did not understand the Planning process. In respect of the two complaints investigated in-house and upheld, Members were advised that the first one had arisen as a result of an out-of-date form being sent to

the complainant. Procedures had been changed and the correct form was now available on the intranet so that it was easily accessible. The second complaint related to a Planning application for prior approval for a change of use, and the Local Planning Authority's failure, when writing to the applicant, to state that prior approval had been refused. The authority had been at fault which was why the complaint had been upheld.

The meeting ended at 10.12 am.