

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

30 January 2012

REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR (GOVERNANCE)

Contact Officers: Stephen Whetnall/Chris Ashcroft Tel No: 01962 848220/848284

RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Standards Committee can grant a dispensation in circumstances where the business of the Council would otherwise be impeded as follows:-

“ the number of Members prohibited from voting....would, but for the granting of any dispensations relating to that business, upset the political balance of that meeting to such an extent as to prejudice the outcome of voting at that meeting.”

The dispensation can be to speak and vote.

It is understood from political groups that, to enable the easier conduct of business, they wish applications to be made by affected Members for a dispensation to speak and vote at the Council's 2012/13 budget meeting, to be held on 23 February 2012. Without a dispensation, those Members might otherwise be disqualified from participation, because of a personal and prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct with regard to their role as, for example, a member of a management committee, or position as a trustee of a charity or voluntary not-for-profit community body, any of which would disqualify them from participation in part of the meeting.

Para 10 (vi) of the Code permits all Members to vote at the end of the debate to set the Council Tax, but declarations of interest must be made, where necessary, on individual budget amendments which may arise during the course of that debate.

It has been suggested that, were a dispensation to be granted, it should not apply to Members who have a personal and prejudicial interest in circumstances where their office on the outside body would give rise to a significant risk of a personal financial liability for the Member concerned.

If any Member wished to seek a dispensation, they have been asked to e mail the Head of Democratic Services prior to this meeting, formally requesting the dispensation to speak and vote in the budget debate at Council on 23 February 2012, setting out the reasons and specifying to which body/bodies the dispensation should apply and the position held by the Member in each of those bodies.

Any requests received will be circulated to the Committee as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee determines any requests from individual Members for a dispensation to vote during all stages of the 2012/13 Council budget debate.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

An Efficient and Effective Council.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None.

RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

None