

PRESENT

Independent Members: Mr. J. Cailes (Chairman)
Mr. Hanmer (Vice Chairman)
R Chester
R Merry
B Molyneux

Councillors Mrs Atherley
Dereli
Grant
Nolan

Parish Councillors M Hammond

Officers: Council Secretary & Solicitor
Assistant Member Services Manager

23. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Parish Councillor David Kitson.

24. URGENT BUSINESS, IF ANY, INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman identified the following items of urgent business :

1. The Standards Board for England – Roadshow 07

The Council Secretary and Solicitor advised members that the Standards Board for England were running eleven roadshow events at various locations across the country and that the nearest event was being held in Liverpool on 6 June 2007.

RESOLVED That the Council Secretary and Solicitor reserve four places for West Lancashire District Council to attend the Roadshow at Liverpool on 6 June 2007.

2. County Council Joint Working

The Council Secretary and Solicitor advised members that the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill included provisions for a more locally-based conduct regime, with more responsibilities for Standards Committees and the Standards Board acting as a light touch regulator. She further advised that an invitation was likely to be received from the County Council to be involved in joint working on standards issues.

RESOLVED That the Council Secretary and Solicitor, in consultation with the Chairman, be given delegated authority to progress this matter.

3. North West Independent Members Forum

The Chairman advised that he had received a further request from Wigan Council inviting Independent Members to join the North West Independent Members Forum and sought views from Members of the Committee.

Comments were received in respect of the following:

- That the forum would be useful to obtain a broader view.
- That members should be proactive in the field of standards.
- That the Forum should not be limited to just Independent Members.
- The additional benefits of being members of the Forum.

RESOLVED That the Council Secretary and Solicitor be requested to contact Wigan Council to obtain information on previous agenda items considered by the Forum and the membership, and submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee as part of joint working on standards issues.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

26. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 1 November 2006 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27. CONSULTATION ON AMENDMENTS TO THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS

The Committee considered the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor which sought a response in relation to the consultation exercise by the Department for Communities and Local Government on proposed amendments to the Model Code of Conduct for Members. The report went on to outline the proposed amendments to the Model Code, together with the questions posed in the consultation paper and to advise that Council would consider the report on 28 February 2007.

The Council Secretary and Solicitor referred to appendix 2 of the report which was a draft response to the consultation paper she also advised that Parish Councillor Kitson's views on the response had been sent to her via an e-mail.

RESOLVED

A. That the report be noted.

B. That Council be recommended to authorise the Council Secretary and Solicitor to respond to the Consultation Paper as detailed in appendix 2 to the report subject to including the following additional points:

- a definition of 'sensitive information' needs to be included.
- Members have a concern regarding the restrictive approach to behaviour outside official duties being limited to criminal convictions in that current Police Policy encourages cautioning and conditional cautioning.

THE CHAIRMAN