

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

HELD: 17 JULY 2007
Start: 4.30pm
Finish: 5.30pm

PRESENT

Independent Members: J Cailes (Chairman)
P Hanmer (Vice Chairman)
R Chester
P Hayman

Councillors: Dereli
Grant

Parish Councillors: M Hammond
D Kitson

Officers: Council Secretary & Solicitor
Assistant Member Services Manager

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Mrs Atherley.

The Chairman welcomed Dr Peter Hayman to the meeting as the newly appointed Independent Member.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 April 2007 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED That Roger Merry be thanked for his services to the Committee and it be noted that an advert has been placed for a new Independent Member to replace him.

6. UPDATE ON ADOPTION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Council Secretary and Solicitor circulated an updated version of which Parish Councils had adopted the revised Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED That the updated schedule, circulated at the meeting, as to when Parish Councils adopted the revised Code of Conduct be noted.

7. STANDARDS BOARD ROADSHOW - 6 JUNE

The Vice-Chairman P Hanmer, raised an issue mentioned at the roadshow in relation to the local filter of complaints and advised that the Standards Board were piloting this process in a number of authorities.

The Council Secretary and Solicitor advised that further guidance would be issued shortly in relation to predetermination and bias regarding planning issues. She further advised that with regard to public speaking and the rules relating to personal and prejudicial interests further guidance would be helpful.

RESOLVED That the issues raised at the Standards Board Roadshow held on 6 June 2007 be noted.

8. LANCASHIRE STANDARDS CONFERENCE - 9 JULY

The Chairman, J Cailles expressed his gratitude for the number of delegates from West Lancashire that attended the Lancashire Standards Conference on 9 July 2007 in Chorley.

The Council Secretary and Solicitor advised that the case studies and the model answers from the conference would be circulated in the Autumn. She further advised that it was likely that the Standards Board in their revised strategic role would be issuing performance targets for Councils to achieve.

The Committee discussed the issue of Independent Members serving on other authorities Standards Committees in Lancashire, including the issue of joint Standards Committees.

- RESOLVED
- A That the feedback received from the Lancashire Standards Conference held on 9 July 2007 be noted.
 - B That the case studies and model answers received at the conference from the Standards Board, be discussed at the next meeting of the committee.
 - C That Independent Members on West Lancashire's Standards Committee did not wish to serve on other authorities Standards Committees.
 - D That Members of the Standards Committee did not wish the Council Secretary and Solicitor to pursue the idea of Joint Standards Committees.
 - E That the Committee welcome any future joint training events.

9. CURRENT POSITION - VISITS BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS TO DISTRICT AND PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Council Secretary and Solicitor circulated the schedule for individual Members of the Committee undertaking visits to District and Parish Council Meetings.

RESOLVED That Members advise the Assistant Member Services Manager on their availability to attend the meetings indicated on the schedule.

10. CODE OF CONDUCT - MEMBERS' TRAINING - MONITORING

Consideration was given to the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor as contained in pages 21 to 27 of the Book of Reports which sought views on how Members should be further trained in the requirements of the Code of Conduct and evaluated the effectiveness of the training undertaken to date.

- RESOLVED A That the training undertaken and the evaluation of it be noted.
- B That the next Seminar/Workshop on the Code of Conduct be held in the autumn with greater time being devoted to case studies in Workshop format.

11. NORTH WEST INDEPENDENT MEMBERS FORUM

The Council Secretary and Solicitor referred to the North West Independent Members Forum and previous correspondence circulated and sought views with regard to membership.

RESOLVED That the Council Secretary and Solicitor continue to monitor developments and report back to the Standards Committee as appropriate.

12. STANDARDS COMMITTEE - PROACTIVE WORK PROGRAMME 2007/8

Consideration was given to the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor as contained on pages 29 to 33 of the Book of Reports, which set out the proposed Work Programme for the Standards Committee 2007/8.

RESOLVED That the Work Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed, incorporating the proactive initiatives set out therein.

THE CHAIRMAN