

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

HELD: 22 APRIL 2008

Start: 4.30pm

Finish: 5.10pm

PRESENT:

Independent Members: J Cailles (Chairman)
P Hanmer (Vice Chairman)
P Hayman
R Patterson

Councillor: Mrs Atherley

Parish Councillor: M Hammond

Officers: Council Secretary and Solicitor
Assistant Legal Services Manager
Assistant Member Services Manager

33 APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed Mr R Patterson to his first meeting of the Committee.

Apologies for absence was received on behalf of Independent Member Professor R Chester, Councillors Grant and Nolan, and Parish Councillor D Kitson.

34 URGENT BUSINESS, IF ANY, INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

36 MINUTES

The Council Secretary and Solicitor advised in relation to Minute 27, that the Government had produced a document with the results of the consultation undertaken on the Locally Based Ethical Framework.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 13 February 2008 were received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37 PLANNING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Committee considered the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor, as contained on pages 179 to 201 of the Book of Reports, which sought to amend the Council's Planning Code of Good Practice to make it consistent with the revised Members' Code of Conduct.

The Committee was advised that the amended Code had been adopted by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 17 April 2008 subject to any comments from the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Planning Code of Practice attached as Appendix 2 to the report be adopted with effect from 23 April 2008.

38 LANCASHIRE STANDARDS CONFERENCE - 31 MARCH 2008

The Council Secretary and Solicitor referred to the Lancashire Standards Conference held on 31 March 2008 at Chorley which had received an excellent turnout from members on the Committee. She advised that Independent Members would be contacted in relation to their availability to sit on the Standards Committees of other local authorities in the Lancashire area.

The Committee felt that the conference had been well organised with an excellent speaker, although the lack of regulations and guidance in relation to the local filter had not been helpful. Reference was also made to the Independent Members Forum.

RESOLVED: That the comments received be noted.

39 LOCAL FILTER

The Council Secretary and Solicitor advised that The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, in respect of the local filter of complaints, were laid before Parliament on 17 April and will come into force on 8 May 2008. She further advised that guidance is awaited from the Standards Board for England which is due to be published shortly.

RESOLVED: That the update from the Council Secretary and Solicitor be noted.

40 REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ADDITIONAL PARISH REPRESENTATIVE

The Council Secretary and Solicitor advised that in accordance with the new forthcoming changes to the role of the Standards Committee a report setting out revised terms of reference would be submitted to the Annual Council meeting on 21 May 2008, the report would include the appointment of an additional Parish Councillor Representative and the establishment of relevant sub-committees.

RESOLVED: That it be noted that the revised terms of reference for the Standards Committee and sub-committees and the appointment of Parish Council Representatives would be dealt with at Annual Council on 21 May 2008.

41 REFERRAL CRITERIA

The Council Secretary and Solicitor advised that work was being undertaken to put together referral criteria in respect of complaints which would be considered at the first meeting of the Committee following the 8 May implementation date.

RESOLVED: That the update from the Council Secretary and Solicitor in relation to the referral criteria be noted.

42 STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2008/09, as contained on pages 205 to 206 of the Book of Reports.

RESOLVED: A That the Standards Committee Work Programme for 2008/09 be approved, subject to the following amendments:

(i) Item 10 be amended to read "Monitoring Officer meeting with Parish Clerks to discuss standards regime - Summer 2008"

(ii) Item 11 be included as follows:
"Standards Committee annual meeting inviting Parish Clerks and Parish Chairmen to discuss Code (Press Release to be issued) – Winter 2008"
and items 11-17 be renumbered 12-18.

B That in respect of item 6, "Visits by individual Members to District and Parish Council Meetings", Parish Clerks be asked to supply copies of agendas and minutes of that meeting and also be advised that these are not formal inspection visits, they are being used as a training tool for members of the committee in order to gain an understanding of how Parish Council meetings are run and to raise the profile of the Standards Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN