

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

HELD: 3 JUNE 2010
Start: 4.00pm
Finish: 5.00pm

PRESENT

Independent Members: J Cailles (Chairman)
P Hanmer (Vice Chairman)
S Ibbs
P Rogan
B Winstanley

Councillors: Mrs U Atherley R Pendleton
R Bailey

Parish Councillors: A Cheetham
R Coady

Officers: Council Secretary & Solicitor
Assistant Member Services Manager
Senior Financial Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Independent Member, P Hanmer and Councillor P Cotterill.

The Chairman advised of the death of Councillor Terry Rice a valued member of the Standards Committee until recently and the Committee held a one minute silence as a mark of respect.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Councillors R Bailey and R Pendleton and Independent Members S Ibbs, P Rogan and B Winstanley as new Members of the Committee.

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 Standards Committee held on 10 February 2010 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chairman advised of the membership approved by Council on 19 May as set out on pages 13 to 14 of the Book of Reports and of the resignation of Parish Councillor Michael Hammond.

- RESOLVED: A. That the membership of the Committee as approved by Council on 19 May 2010 be noted.
- B. That Parish Council Hammond be thanked for his contribution to the work of the Standards Committee.

6. WHISTLEBLOWING CODE

The Committee considered the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor the purpose of which was to update the Council's whistleblowing arrangements.

- RESOLVED: That the updated Whistleblowing Code, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be agreed and circulated to all staff and Councillors, and that Divisional Managers promote the Code to contractors and suppliers as appropriate.

7. COMPLAINTS, REVIEWS AND INVESTIGATIONS - STATISTICS

The Committee considered the statistics produced by the Council Secretary and Solicitor in respect of the number of complaints, reviews, investigations and hearings.

- RESOLVED: That the current statistics be noted.

8. REVIEW OF THE LOCAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

The Committee considered the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor which advised that Standards for England (SfE) had published its review of the local government standards framework, entitled 'Local Standards 2.0 – The Proportionality Upgrade?'

The Council Secretary and Solicitor circulated a letter from SfE to the Chairman of the Standards Committee regarding the Government's announcement to 'abolish the Standards Board regime' and that the detail of the scope and implications of this proposal were awaited.

- RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted and members be advised of future developments in due course.

9. STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND ONLINE ANNUAL RETURN 2009/2010

The Committee considered the Standards for England online Annual Return 2009/10 submitted on 16 April 2010.

- RESOLVED: That the Annual Return 2009/10 be noted.

10. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE VACANCY ON STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor which referred to the appointment of a parish representative to the Standards Committee due to the vacancy that has arisen from the resignation of Parish Council Hammond.

RESOLVED: That the Council Secretary and Solicitor be given authority, in consultation with the Leader, to appoint the nominee with the highest number of votes received, as Parish Representative until the Annual Meeting in May 2012, once the appointment process is complete, as detailed in paragraph 3 of the report.

11. 'A PLACE FOR STANDARDS' 2010 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Committee considered member attendance at the forthcoming Annual Assembly of Standards Committees on 18 and 19 October 2010 in Birmingham.

RESOLVED: That members advise the Council Secretary and Solicitor should they wish to attend, however bookings would not be made until September in order to take account of developments with the standards regime.

12. CODE OF CONDUCT SEMINAR FOR OFFICERS, BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCILLORS

The Committee considered the date for the next Code of Conduct Seminar for officers, borough and parish councillors.

RESOLVED: That the Council Secretary and Solicitor, in consultation with the Chairman, put in place appropriate arrangements with regard to the seminar taking account future developments with the standards regime.

13. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING INVITING PARISH CLERKS AND PARISH CHAIRMEN TO DISCUSS THE CODE

The Committee considered arrangements for inviting Parish Clerks and Parish Chairmen to a future meeting to discuss the code.

RESOLVED: That this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to enable future developments with the standards regime to be taken into account.

14. ANNUAL MONITORING OF TRAINING, TRAINING NEEDS AND TRAINING PLANS FOR INDEPENDENT AND PARISH REPRESENTATIVES

The Committee considered the updated report circulated by the Council Secretary and Solicitor which detailed training undertaken to date and sought to put in place arrangements to identify training needs and establish training plans for Independent Members and Parish representatives.

RESOLVED: A. That the training undertaken and the evaluation of it be noted.

B. That identification of training needs and training plans for Independent Members and Parish representatives be prepared in the same manner as they will be for elected Councillors.

15. COUNCIL SECRETARY AND SOLICITOR ATTENDANCE AT PARISH CLERKS MEETING

The Committee considered the attendance of the Council Secretary and Solicitor, as Monitoring Officer, at a meeting of the Parish Clerks on 18 June 2010 to discuss the standards regime.

RESOLVED: That it be noted that it may be more appropriate to defer attendance to a future Parish Clerks' meeting when further details have been released by the Government on any proposed changes to the standards regime.

16. STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Committee considered the revised Standards Committee Work Programme for 2010/11 including which matters were necessary as part of the existing regime and which matters were planned in order to be proactive.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme 2010/11 be agreed.

17. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Assessment Sub-Committee held on 15 and 26 April 2010 be noted:

THE CHAIRMAN