

Time Commenced – 10.00am
Time Finished – 11.46am

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
27 OCTOBER 2008**

Present: Reverend Canon R B Blowers – Chair
Mrs C McDowall, Mr P Sunderland
Councillors Jennings and Skelton

Officers in Attendance: Michael Foote - Corporate Director, Corporate and Adult Services
Steve Dunning – Assistant Director – Democratic Services

11/08 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jackson.

12/08 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

13/08 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

14/08 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2008 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

15/08 Minutes of the Sub Committee Meetings

The minutes of the Assessment Sub Committee held on 2 September 2008 and the Review Sub Committee held on 17 October 2008 were received.

16/08 Members Complaints Procedure- Update and Evaluation

The Committee considered a report which stated that from 8 May 2008 changes in the law meant that all complaints about the behaviour of Local Councillors should be made directly to the Council's Standards Committee instead of the Standards Board for England. At its meeting on 14 July 2008 the Committee approved the Members Complaints Procedure and the establishment of two sub committees dealing with the assessment of complaints and the review of these assessments. The Procedure and the establishment of the two sub committees were endorsed by Full Council at its meeting on 16 July 2008.

Since the changes in the law the Council had received three complaints regarding Councillors. Having successfully undertaken a practical application of the Members Complaints Procedure by dealing with the three complaints about councillors, the report set out proposed changes to the procedure which would help strengthen the procedure and remove ambiguity.

Resolved to note the information set out in the report and approve the minor amendments to the procedure.

17/08 Delivering the Goods: Local Standards in Action – Seventh Annual Assembly of Standards Committees – 13/14 October 2008

Philip Sunderland circulated a note on the 'Delivering the Goods: Local Standards in Action' Seventh Annual Assembly of Standards Committees held in Birmingham on 13-14 October 2008. Councillor Jennings also reported that he had attended the Assembly and had found it very interesting.

18/08 Training

The Committee considered that the recent joint training in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham had been effective and provided value for money. It was noted that a training session would be held in Derby on 12 November 2008 for new Members and any other elected or co-opted Members who wished to attend.

19/08 Recruitment of Additional Independent Member

The Committee considered a report which stated that approval had been given to recruit an additional Independent Member of the Standards Committee to help with the extra workload generated by the local assessment framework. The Council's Audit and Accounts Committee had recently agreed to recruit two additional members of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Members' Allowances to increase the range of expertise and provide cover for absences. In the interests of efficiency and effectiveness it had been decided to combine the recruitment process for the three positions.

Resolved

- 1. To note the process for the recruitment of an additional Independent Member of the Standards Committee and two members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.**
- 2. To set up dates for members for the shortlisting and interview of candidates.**
- 3. To invite the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel, and Chair or Vice Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee, to participate in the selection process.**

20/08 Co-optees Allowance for Independent Members

The Committee considered a report which stated that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Members' Allowances had been carrying out a fundamental review of the Council's Members Allowances Scheme. The Members Allowances Regulations provide for the payment of a Co-optees Allowance for attendance at conferences and meetings, to any co-opted and appointed members of the council's committees or sub committees. The panel considered the results of a survey of other Council's Members' Allowances Schemes which showed that approximately 50%, including most large city councils, pay a Co-optees Allowance to the Independent Members of their Standards Committee. Having regard to the increased workload created by the new local assessment framework, the Panel considered it was appropriate to recommend that an allowance of £500 a year be made to Independent Members of the Standards Committee. That recommendation had been approved. The new allowance would be paid pro-rata in 2008/09 with the full allowance taking effect from 1 April 2009. There was provision for an Independent Member to renounce the allowance if they would prefer not to receive it. Independent Members may claim travel and subsistence allowances on top of the Co-optees Allowance.

Resolved to note the introduction of a Co-optees Allowance for Independent Members of the Standards Committee.

21/08 Communities in Control: Real People real Power Codes of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees – A Consultation

The Committee considered a consultation paper 'Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power Codes of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees. The Committee made the following answers:

- Question 7 to remove the need to declare the interest each time for three years.
- Question 13 - Yes
- Question 14 - Yes
- Question 15 - No
- Question 16 - Yes
- Question 17 – Agreed to be applied to politically restricted posts.
- Question 18 - Yes
- Question 19 - No
- Question 20 - No
- Question 21 - No
- Question 22 – Not applicable

It was noted that the consultation had been referred to the Head of Human Resources for his comments on the Employee Code of Conduct part of the Consultation.

22/08 Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee agreed the following dates for future meetings, all meetings to commence at 10.00am.

Monday 9 March 2009

Monday 29 June 2009

Monday 5 October 2008

Chair of the next ensuing meeting
at which these minutes were signed