

Time Commenced – 2.00pm
Time Finished – 3.15pm

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
20 OCTOBER 2006

Present: Reverend Canon R B Blowers – Chair
Mrs C McDowall,
Councillors Jackson and Skelton

Officers in Attendance: Michael Foote, Corporate Director - Corporate and
Adult Social Services
Steve Dunning, Assistant Director – Democratic
Services
Mike Moody, Business and Customer Support Officer
Ellen Bird, Constitutional Services Officer

01/06 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Mr P Sunderland.

02/06 Late Items

The Committee recorded their thanks to Councillor Baxter for his contributions to the Committee's Work.

The Committee noted with sadness the death of Colin Brown who had worked as a Councillor at Derby City Council for many years and had served on the Standards Committee.

03/06 Minutes

The Chair reported that the minutes had not included the offer by Councillor Skelton to establish the Standards Committee arrangements in Osnabruck.

Councillor Skelton reported that Osnabruck had a Constitution which was made up of statutory elements and locally agreed arrangements. She felt that issues were dealt with in a less bureaucratic manor. Declarations of Interest would be explained at the meeting and the Committee would then decide how to proceed. It was noted that there was no real code for behaviour and conduct. The Committee noted that Chief Officers were also politicised.

The Committee thanked Councillor Skelton for her report.

Subject to the inclusion of the above request for information about procedures in Osnabruck, the minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

04/06 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jackson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in minute number 10/06 as she had been subject to investigation by the Standards Board for England.

05/06 Standards Conference Feedback

Resolved to defer this item for consideration a future meeting.

06/06 ‘A Question of Standards: Prescott’s Town Hall Madness’ By the Cornerstone Group of Conservative MPs and the Response of the Standards Board for England

The Committee received a copy of the report by the Cornerstone Group of Conservative MPs and the response of the Standards Board for England.

The Chair emphasised that the Committee wished to distance itself from the political arguments put forward in the report.

Councillor Skelton felt that all parties believed the Code of Conduct could be overly restrictive about some issues.

Michael Foote reported that some Members of the Council were reluctant to join the Planning Control Committee as this limited to some extent, their powers to represent their ward constituents.

It was noted that the Code was currently under review and that a revised version was expected within the next few months.

Resolved to note the report and to request that the revised Code be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

07/06 New Social Services Complaints Procedure

The Committee received a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services.

It had been proposed originally that the Commission for Social Care Inspections assume responsibility for the stage 3 complaints procedure. However this had not happened. The process therefore still involved a Stage 3 Panel with new increased responsibilities for the Chair.

It was noted that the panel Chair was drawn from a county-wide independent panel and for Derby, the other two members were independent Members of the Standards Committee.

It was pointed out that the Independent Standards Committee Members were not obligated to sit on these appeal panels. However the independent members present at the meeting indicated a willingness to sit on future panels as required, subject to their availability.

It was noted that some additional training may be necessary.

Resolved to note the report.

08/06 Annual Report

The Committee received an Annual Report for the period June 2005 to May 2006 from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services.

The Chair requested that paragraphs numbered 2.5 and 2.6 be swapped.

It was noted that the Ethical Framework Training issues had not changed a lot over the past year and it was felt that it was unnecessary for all Councillors to attend a further training session on this issue.

Resolved

- 1. To note the report**
- 2. To agree that Ethical Framework Training be limited to recently appointed Councillors with an open invitation for other Councillors to attend if they wished**
- 3. The Committee agreed the following dates for future meetings and that the meetings would start at 10am:**
 - **22 January 2007**
 - **23 April 2007**
 - **9 July 2007**
 - **29 October 2007**

09/06 Feedback from Derbyshire Network of Independent Members

Resolved to defer this item for consideration at a future meeting.

10/06 Complaints and Investigations Monitoring

The Committee received details of recent referrals of complaints to the Standards Board for England.

Resolved to note the reports.

Minutes End