

Time Commenced – 10.30am

Time Finished – 11.35pm

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

28 MAY 2010

Present: Mr P Sunderland (Chair)
Mr P McCrea, Mrs C McDowall, Mr P Purnell and Ms D Reid

Councillors Hird and Jackson

Officers in Attendance: Michael Foote – Deputy Chief Executive – Monitoring Officer
Steve Dunning – Assistant Director – Democratic Services
Daniel Cooper – Constitutional Services Officer

01/10 Appointment of Chair for the 2010/11 Municipal Year

Resolved to appoint Mr P Sunderland as Chair for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

02/10 Appointment of Vice Chair for the 2010/11 Municipal Year

Resolved to appoint Ms D Reid as Vice Chair for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

03/10 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wood.

04/10 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

The Chair stated that the Committee needed to decide the meeting dates for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

Resolved to hold four meetings in the 2010/11 Municipal Year at 10am on:

- 3 September 2010
- 3 December 2010
- 4 March 2011
- 27 May 2011

and additional meetings where required.

05/10 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hird declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute no. 47/09 because she was a witness to the investigation.

Councillor Jackson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute no. 47/09 because she was the subject of the complaint.

06/10 Minutes

The Chair stated that two Members of the Committee needed to be selected to attend the 2010 Standards for England Conference.

Resolved:

- A. To send Councillor Hird, Mr P McCrea and Stuart Leslie the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to attend the 2010 Standards for England Conference; and**
- B. That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

07/10 Framework of the Annual Report

The Committee considered an oral report of the Assistant Director – Democratic Services on the Framework of the Committee's first Annual Report. He provided Members with a number of example reports from comparative authorities and asked for their suggestions.

Resolved:

- A. To adopt a similar style of Annual Report to Amber Valley Borough Council;**
- B. To include photographs of all Members of the Committee; and**
- C. To ensure that the Annual Report is reviewed by the Plain English Officer before it is published**

08/10 Report of the meetings of the Independent Members of the Standards Committee with the political groups

The Committee received an oral report by the Chair on the meetings of the independent Members of the Standards Committee with the political groups. The Chair stated that he had not yet had the chance to compile the findings of the meetings. The Independent Members had now met with all the political groups and had found the meetings very beneficial. The Chair stated that he hoped the Independent Members could meet with the political groups before the next Annual Meeting. He stated that he had been assured by the political groups that

whatever happens to the Standards Framework in the future that Councillors would continue to be monitored independently by the Standards Committee.

He stated that there were a number of protocols, such as the elections protocol and the neighbourhood forums guide, which need to be reinforced with Councillors. He also stated that some Councillors had raised concern with the length of time each complaint takes to process. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that unfortunately the complaint process is bound by Statute and each complaint needs to be thoroughly investigated. The Committee suggested that should the current Standards Framework be abolished, Members would like to see a more flexible system in place with a more effective complaints filter process.

Resolved:

- A. To note the oral report and the political groups' support of the Standards Committee; and**
- B. To invite the political groups to meet with the Independent Members of the Standards Committee before next Annual Meeting.**

09/10 Training Arrangements

Members considered an oral report by the Assistant Director – Democratic Services relating to the training arrangements for the Members of the Council and the Independent Members of the Standards Committee. He stated that the new Councillors had now received their induction training and would have their session on the Ethical Framework in the autumn. The new Independent Members of the Standards Committee would be welcome to attend this session.

Ms D Reid asked when the Councillors had last received training on equality and Diversity. The Assistant Director – Democratic Services stated that there is usually one scheduled into the training requirements of each Councillor but would check and report back.

Resolved:

- A. To invite the Members of the Standards Committee to the Councillor Training day on the Ethical Framework; and**
- B. To hold one-to-one training sessions for the new Members of the Standards Committee.**

10/10 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved to exclude the press and public during consideration of Minutes 45/09 under Regulation 8(6) of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 and under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt

information as defined in paragraph 7(C) of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

11/10 Summary of Progress with Member Complaints

The Committee considered a report setting out details of the progress and outcome of the Member complaints received so far in the 2009-2010 municipal year.

Resolved to note the report.

12/10 Summary of Progress with Member Complaints

The Committee considered a report setting out details of the progress and outcome of the Member complaints received so far in the 2010-2011 municipal year.

Resolved to note the report

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