

Time Commenced – 10.00am

Time Finished – 11.07am

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**11 JANUARY 2010**

**Present:** Reverend Canon R B Blowers (Chair)  
Mrs C McDowall, Ms D Reid and Mr P Sunderland  
Councillors Hird and Jackson

**Officers in Attendance:** Michael Foote – Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Services – Monitoring Officer  
Steve Dunning – Assistant Director – Democratic Services  
Daniel Cooper – Constitutional Services Officer

### **29/09 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Holmes.

### **30/09 Late Items Introduced by the Chair**

The Chair asked when the report on the publicity arrangements for the Standards Committee would be ready for Members to consider. The Assistant Director – Democratic Services stated that this report would feed into the Standards Committee's Annual Report in May.

**Resolved to note the update.**

### **31/09 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Jackson declared a personal interest in Minute no. 37/09 because she was the subject of a complaint.

### **32/09 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendments:

1. That Michael Foote's job title be changed to read: 'Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Services';
2. That Minute 28/09, paragraph one, line one be amended to read: 'The Chair welcomed Councillor Carr to the meeting, introduced the Committee';
3. That Minute 28/09, page two, line one be amended to read: 'Committee for England Regulations 2008, as amended, that there had been a';
4. That Minute 28/09, page two, paragraph three, line two, be amended to read: 'the complainants who had made their addresses available and circulated a';

5. That Minute 28/09, Resolution One, line three, be amended to read: 'full and frank apology he sent to the complainants.'

## 33/09 Corporate Governance Review

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Services on the Corporate Governance Review. Members were asked to consider their role within this review and whether they wished to take this opportunity to reassess the Council's codes of conduct.

The Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Services stated that the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations had not been reviewed since it had been created.

The Chair suggested that in future the Committee should have a section in part ten of the report to add their contribution with the Standards Committee Annual Report to support their comments.

Mr Sunderland stated that the Independent Members' meetings with the political groups will identify some areas that could feed into the Corporate Governance Review. He welcomed the opportunity to review the codes of conduct. The Chair supported the proposed review of the codes of conduct and invited councillors to suggest other codes of conduct and protocols that the Committee could potentially review.

The Assistant Director – Democratic Services stated that the review was wider than just looking at the conduct of Members and was also looking at the Council's approach to partnership working. Mr Sunderland suggested that the Council's codes of conduct should also apply to those taking part in partnership working. The Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Services said that this was raised at the Standards Conference last year. It may be difficult to impose the current codes and something may need to be created for this purpose.

Councillor Jackson informed the Committee that there is a code of conduct that applies to Neighbourhood Forums and Boards but it is self-regulated by these bodies and is not strongly enforced.

Ms Reid stated that any new code of conduct for partnership working would depend on the buy-in of the members of that group. Any code of conduct would have to be balanced so as not to discourage people from taking part.

### **Resolved:**

**A. To note the report;**

**B. To invite officers to draft the relevant sections of the Annual Governance Review for the Committee to consider at their next meeting; and**

**C. To invite officers to prepare a Code of Conduct to apply to partnership meetings.**

**34/09 Meeting with Political Groups – Update from the Independent Members**

Members received an oral report from an Independent Member of the Standards Committee, Philip Sunderland, on a recent meeting with the Cabinet. The Independent Members will also be meeting with the Conservative group's Shadow Cabinet and the Labour group's Spokespeople. A written report has been circulated to the Independent Members outlining the findings from their recent meeting with the Liberal Democrats and additional content will be added following the future meetings with the other political groups.

Councillor Jackson informed the Independent Members that the Labour Spokespeople could meet with them at 10am on 20 January 2010.

**Resolved to note the update and for Mr P Sunderland to draft a report summarising the Independent Members' findings once they had met with all three political groups.**

**35/09 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Resolved to exclude the press and public during consideration of the subsequent items under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.**

**36/09 Summary of Progress with Member Complaints**

The Committee considered a report setting out details of the progress and outcome of the 16 Member complaints received so far in the 2009-2010 municipal year. It was suggested that all Members of the Standards Committee should receive the decision notices from the Assessment and Review Sub Committees.

**Resolved to note the report and to send all Members of the Standards Committee copies of the decision notices from the Assessment and Review Sub Committees.**

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