

Time Commenced – 10.00am  
Time Finished – 10.50am

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
9 MARCH 2009**

**Present:** Reverend Canon R B Blowers – Chair  
Mrs C McDowall, Ms D Reid  
Councillors Jackson, Jennings and Skelton

**Officers in Attendance:** Michael Foote - Corporate Director, Corporate and Adult Services (Part)  
David Romaine - Scrutiny and Complaints Manager  
Olu Idowu – Principal Solicitor Litigation

**23/08 Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Philip Sunderland.

**24/08 Late Items Introduced by the Chair**

In accordance with Section 100(B) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to admit the following late item on the grounds that it could not wait until the next meeting.

- Assessment Sub Committee

The Chair welcomed Dionne Reid (Independent Member) to her first meeting.

**25/08 Declarations of Interest**

Michael Foote reported that he would leave during the discussion of minute no 31/08 below as he had been involved in the investigation.

**26/08 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2008 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

**27/08 Guidance References to the Adjudication Panel by the Standards Committee**

The Committee considered guidance from the Adjudication Panel for England on the circumstances in which the Adjudication Panel for England would consider accepting reference from a Standards Committee under regulation 17 of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008.

**Resolved to note the guidance.**

## 28/08 Proposed Revision of the Corporate Complaints Procedure

The Committee considered a report on the proposed revision of the Corporate Complaints Procedure in view of changes to the ways in which the Local Government Ombudsman dealt with complaints and the facility which would be offered by the Councillor Call for Action (Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) for responding to a series of complaints which demonstrate a 'systematic failure' in a particular service area.

**Resolved to approve the proposed amendments to the Corporate Complaints Procedure needed to address:**

- **the forthcoming changes to the way the Local Government Ombudsman deals with complaints and**
- **the facility that would be offered by the Councillor Call for Action (Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) for responding to a series of complaints which demonstrate a 'systematic failure' in a particular service area.**

## 29/08 Assessment Sub Committee

The Director of Corporate and Adult Services reported that a complaint had been received about a Councillor.

**Resolved to arrange a meeting of the Assessment Sub Committee for Wednesday 18 March 2009 at 11am. The members of the Assessment Sub Committee to be Councillor Jennings, Cynthia McDowall and Dionne Reid.**

## 30/08 Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider a resolution to exclude the press and public during consideration of the following item

“that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involve 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information”

## 31/08 Consideration of an Investigation Report

The Committee considered a report setting out details of an investigation into an allegation against Councillor Hickson of a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

The report concluded that in terms of the allegation no breach of the Council's Code of Conduct had occurred.

### **Resolved**

- 1. to accept the conclusion of the investigation that no breach of the Council's Code of Conduct had occurred.**
- 2. to ask the Director of Corporate and Adult Services to write to the following people to inform them of the decision:**
  - The Complainant**
  - Councillor Hickson**
  - The Standards Board for England**
- 3. to ask the Director of Corporate and Adult Services to write to Claire Lefort to thank her for the time spent conducting the investigation and for the thoroughness of the report.**

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