

Time Commenced – 10.00am
Time Finished – 11.15am

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
29 JUNE 2009

Present: Reverend Canon R B Blowers – Chair
Mrs C McDowall, Mr P Sunderland
Councillors Hird, Holmes and Jackson

Officers in Attendance: Stuart Leslie – Chief Legal Officer
David Romaine - Scrutiny and Complaints Manager
Steve Dunning - Assistant Director – Democratic
Services

01/09 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Dionne Reid.

02/09 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

The Chair requested that the following items be standing items on future agendas:

- Assessment Reviews – Update
- Update on Complaints
- Update on Stage 3 Social Services Complaints

The Chair also requested an update on bookings for the annual conference.

03/09 Declarations of Interest

All Members of the Committee declared personal interests in the matters referred to in Minute No.25/09 relating to Members' Allowances.

04/09 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2009 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

05/09 Members' Allowances

The Chair had asked that the Committee considered Members' Allowances in the light of the current controversy over MP's expenses.

The Committee received a briefing from the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) on Members' Allowances and Expenses, together with the Council's current Members' Allowances Scheme.

Resolved to note the briefing and scheme.

06/09 Standards Board Intervention, Joint Standards Committees and Dispensation

The Committee considered a report which stated that the New Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Regulations 2009 (SI 2009/1255) came into force on 15 June 2009. They made provision for the Standards Board for England to suspend the functions of a local Standards Committee where the Committee was failing to perform its functions satisfactorily, and either to discharge its functions itself or to arrange for another authority's Standards Committee to discharge them. The regulations gave authorities a power to establish Joint Standards Committees, and extended the power of the Standards Committee to give members dispensations, where they would otherwise be prohibited from participating on a matter because of a prejudicial interest.

Resolved to note the report.

07/09 Other Action Guidance

The Committee considered a report which stated that the Assessment Sub Committee had three options when dealing with a complaint that a member had failed or may have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. These were:

- Take no action in respect of the complaint
- Refer the complaint to the Monitoring Officer
- Refer the complaint to the Standards Board for England

If the Assessment Sub Committee decided to refer the complaint to the Monitoring Officer it could direct him/her either to investigate the matter or take steps other than carrying out an investigation. The guidance set out in appendix 2 of the report applied to situations where the Assessment Sub Committee was minded to direct the Monitoring Officer to take steps other than carrying out an investigation.

Resolved to note the guidance for taking 'Other Action' in response to a complaint about an elected member.

08/09 Update on Complaints

The Committee noted that there was currently one complaint being investigated.

Resolved to receive updates at future meetings.

MINUTES END