

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009**

**PRESENT** – *Councillors K Foster, Humphrys and J Williams.*

**PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER** – *Councillor Malowana-Murphy*

**INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE** – *Mr L Loft (Chair), Mrs S Entwistle, Mr Z Aziz, Mr B Kiernan, Ms H Kaur-Kalkat, Mrs V Webb and Mrs V Miles.*

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE-** *Linda Comstive (Director of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer), Janie Berry (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Paul Jones (Head of Democratic Services).*

**RESOLUTIONS**

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Z. Khan and Graham and Mr S Simpson.

**2 Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to the minutes being amended to show that Mrs V Webb and Mr Z Aziz submitted their apologies.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

**4 Matters Arising**

***Update on Declarations of Interests***

Since the beginning of the Municipal year Democratic Services had contacted all members on an individual basis to ensure the Register of Interests was kept up to date. Members were regularly making declarations of interest at Council and Committee meetings.

**RESOLVED:**

That the information be noted;

## ***Communications***

Places have been reserved for two delegates to attend the Annual Assembly on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at ICC Birmingham. It was proposed that the delegates would be the Monitoring Officer and Mr Aziz.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the delegates to the Annual Assembly be the Monitoring Officer and Mr Aziz.

## **5 Stakeholder Tracker 2009 (Satisfaction with the Standards Board for England and Attitudes to the Ethical Environment)**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the outcome of the research exercise undertaken by the Standards Boards for England to assess the satisfaction of local government with the performance of the Standards Board for England.

The research was discussed by the Committee and it was proposed that the issues and concerns raised by the Committee be forwarded to the Standards Board for England.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted and that the issues and concerns raised by the Committee be forwarded to the Standards Board for England.

## **6 Standards Committee Annual Report**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report on the Annual Report of the Committee for 2008/09. A copy of the Annual Report was submitted. also submitted.

### **RESOLVED :**

1. That the Annual Report be noted.
2. That the report be forwarded to all the Parish Councils and posted on the Council website.

## **7 Promotion of Ethical Governance by the Standards Committee**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report recommending that the Committee adopt a framework for the promotion of good ethical governance so as to ensure compliance with the principles contained within the Comprehensive Area Agreement.

The framework would include the following:-

- An increased public awareness of the role of the Standards Committee
- The development of an “ethical standards roadshow”
- Regular features to be printed in the Shuttle and Teamtalk
- Awareness raising at Council meetings e.g. Executive Board etc.
- Meetings with Chief Officers and Leaders of the Council with the Monitoring Officer and Chair at least annually.

The Committee discussed forming a Task Group to take these issues forward. Volunteers to form the group included the Chair and Vice Chair, Ms Kaur-Kalkat, Mr Aziz and Mrs Miles.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the framework be adopted.
2. That the programme area be developed by the Task Group from the Committee in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer.

## **8 Guidance From the Standards Board on Referral for Other Action**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report updating the Committee on the guidance available from the Standards Board for England as to when an Initial Assessment Committee may refer a matter to the Monitoring Officer for other action.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report and guidance be noted.

**9 New Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Regulations 2009**

The Director of Legal Services submitted a report detailing the impact of the new regulations upon local authority Standards Committees which give the provision that the Standards Board can intervene when it is the view that the authority's Standards Committee has failed in respect of guidance or direction from the Standards Board or the Committee has not acted in a timely fashion.

The report also detailed the requirements for sub committees to give dispensations to members under certain circumstances. The Committee discussed the issues raised by the report.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the information be noted;
2. That members of the Standards Committee agreed to establish Sub Committees comprising of 3 members to deal with applications for dispensations.

**10 Publication of Standards Board Quarterly Statistics**

The Director of Legal Services reported on the first quarter return to the Standards Board for England. A copy of the Annual Return for 2008/09 was also submitted.

**RESOLVED:**

That the information be noted.

**11 Communications**

***Standards Board Bulletins 43 & 44***

The newsletters were submitted for information.

***Cases of Interest***

Cases of interest to the Committee were submitted for information.

***Budget Request for Funding by Monitoring Officer to the Council***

The Monitoring Officer gave a verbal report on the request for funding which has been submitted to the Council. The Committee noted the information.

***Feedback From the Meeting of the Executive Board Held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009***

An update was given regarding the publication of Members allowances, expenses and Register of Members Interests on the Council website.

**12 Date of Next Meeting**

The next ordinary meeting would be held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

**13 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item in view of the fact that the business to be transacted was exempt by virtue of Paragraph 7 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

**14 Verbal Report on Complaints**

A verbal report was given on complaints.

**RESOLVED** – That the update be noted.

Signed.....

Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were signed

Date.....