

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

10.00 A.M.

17TH JUNE 2010

PRESENT:- Councillors: Roger Dennison, Sheila Denwood, Janie Kirkman, Roger Mace and Roger Sherlock and Jude Towers (Substitute for Ian McCulloch)

Independent Members: Stephen Lamley (Chairman) and David Jordison,

Parish Council Representatives: Paul Gardner, Susan O'Brien and Frank Senior

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Ian McCulloch
Independent Members Tony James and Sue McIntyre
Parish Council Representative Margaret Davy

Officers in attendance:-

Sarah Taylor	Head of Legal and Human Resources and Monitoring Officer
Liz Bateson	Senior Democratic Support Officer

1 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2010/11

It was proposed by Councillor Sherlock and seconded by Councillor Denwood that Tony James be appointed Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

There being no further nominations, the Chairman declared the proposition carried.

Resolved:

That Tony James be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year.

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2010 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were none.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND - ANNUAL RETURN

The Chairman informed the meeting that the second annual return which detailed the work of the Standards Committee during the previous year had been completed and submitted to Standards for England by the Monitoring Officer. The Chairman had been consulted in the preparation of the response and a copy of the return would be placed on the Council's website following the meeting.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

6 STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND - A REVIEW OF THE LOCAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

The Monitoring Officer presented a document which had been published by Standards for England and submitted to the government for consideration in March 2010. The document was presented to Members for information and as an indication as to how the local standards framework might change in the future although it was reported that there might be other changes following on from the general election. A copy of a letter of the 1st June 2010 from the Chair of Standards for England was also appended to the agenda which referred to proposals to abolish the Standards Board although it was noted that the statutory framework would remain operative until relevant legislation was passed.

Members considered the recommendations set out in the review which were intended to simplify the process. The Committee agreed that there should be greater flexibility in the way in which the Committee operated and requested the Monitoring Officer to advise Standards for England of the Committee's comments in relation to this.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer informs Standards for England of the Committee's comments in relation to the need for greater flexibility within the local standards framework.

7 SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS

The Monitoring Officer reported that the Committee's work programme provided for the Committee to receive information about the number of complaints received and their outcome at six monthly intervals. However, as the meeting scheduled for the 22nd April 2010 had been cancelled the summary was presented to this meeting.

Attached to the agenda was a table summarising the complaints finalised and/or received since October 2009 which indicated that one complaint had been finalised with three others under investigation.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 ANNUAL REVIEW OF REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

Members received a report outlining the Monitoring Officer's practice to undertake an annual review of the registration of interests. On the 10th May 2010 an email had been sent to all Members of the City Council reminding them of the need to register any changes and requesting either a signed declaration to the effect that there had been no change or the return of the completed 'change' form by the 31st May 2010. However the Monitoring Officer was aware that some appointments would be made at the June meetings of Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny and some councillors would be awaiting these appointments before responding. An update of the current level of replies was given at the meeting, 46 having now been received with 14 outstanding.

The Monitoring Officer had also written to the clerks of all the parish councils within the district requesting them to draw to the attention of their councillors the requirement to register any changes to their personal interests

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 WORK PROGRAMME

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report detailing progress on the Committee's work programme for 2010. It was reported that no further consultation on or information about the proposed revised Code of Conduct had been issued prior to the general election and it was difficult to plan for any work arising from the proposed revised Code until the government's position was clear. It was noted that the work programme would need to be revised when further details became clear with regard to the future of Standards for England.

The Monitoring Officer informed the meeting that the ethical governance survey which had been timetabled for consideration at the cancelled April meeting would be presented to this Committee and to the Audit Committee in the autumn.

Resolved:

That the work programme be noted.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 10.30 a.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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