

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

10.00 A.M.

21ST JUNE 2007

PRESENT:- Councillors Jon Barry, Shirley Burns (Substitute for David Kerr), Sheila Denwood, Sarah Fishwick, Janie Kirkman, Roger Sherlock and Joyce Taylor

Independent Members: Sue McIntyre

Apologies for Absence

Independent Members: Tony James

Officers in attendance:-

Sarah Taylor	Head of Legal and Human Resources and Monitoring Officer
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Sharon Marsh	Democratic Support Officer

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

In view of the absence of the Chairman, at the commencement of the meeting, nominations were invited for a Chairman from Members for this meeting only.

It was proposed by Councillor Joyce Taylor and seconded by Councillor Janie Kirkman:-

“That Sue McIntyre be appointed as Chairman for this meeting only.”

Resolved unanimously:

That Sue McIntyre be appointed as Chairman for this meeting only.

Sue McIntyre took the Chair.

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2007 were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

3 REVIEW OF PROTOCOL ON PUBLICITY FOR ALLEGATIONS OF BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT MADE TO THE STANDARDS BOARD

The Monitoring Officer presented a report that requested that the Committee consider whether it wished to recommend to Council any amendments to the Protocol on Publicity for Allegations of Breach of the Code of Conduct made to the Standards Board.

The report had stemmed from the previous meeting of the Standards Committee which had agreed that the Monitoring Officer report back to the Committee on possible amendments to the protocol in light of the investigation that had taken place (Minute 14 refers).

Members discussed the report at length, and in particular the proposed wording set out in Paragraph 2.2 of the report. It was suggested that the final sentence might be clearer if the words "A Member who is aware of a complaint should not make any public comment on it" were to replace the words "No member who is aware of a complaint should make any public comment on it".

Resolved:

That the Committee recommends to Council that the Protocol on Publicity for Allegations of Breach of the Code of Conduct made to the Standards Board, be amended to provide as follows (with the changes in italics):

"When a Member has made or is considering making a complaint to the Standards Board alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Member should not make the complaint or allegation known to the public in any forum, whether at a meeting that is open to the public or through the press or media, *and should not discuss the complaint or possible complaint in such a manner as is reasonably likely to cause the complaint to be made known to the public. It is recognised that a Member who has made or is considering making a complaint to the Standards Board may wish to discuss the matter within the Member's own political group or seek advice from a third party. In such cases, it is the Member's responsibility to ensure that any person(s) in whom the member confides agree(s) not to make the information known to the press and/or public. A Member who is aware of a complaint should not make any public comment on it, and the matter should not be the subject of discussion or debate within Council.*"

4 CODE OF CONDUCT - COUNCIL REQUIREMENTS WITH REGARD TO CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The Committee considered a report of the Monitoring Officer concerning proposed guidance to Members on the Council's requirements with regard to confidential information for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iv)(bb) of the Code of Conduct. Members were advised that it might be helpful to Members for the Standards Board Guidance on this paragraph of the Code of Conduct to be readily available in the Constitution, together with a statement of the Council's requirements with regard to confidential information.

Resolved:

That the Committee recommend that Council adopt, as part of the Constitution, information for Members on the Council's requirements with regard to the disclosure of information, as set out in the Appendix to the report, and appended to these Minutes.

5 CODE OF CONDUCT - TRAINING

The Monitoring Officer presented a report that advised the Committee of the Member training that had been held in respect of the Code of Conduct, and that considered plans for training Parish Council Members.

Members were informed that 56 City Councillors had taken part in training offered on the Code of Conduct and that arrangements were being made to train the 4 remaining Councillors.

The Monitoring Officer would be attending a meeting of the LAPT (Lancashire

Association of Parish and Town Councils) at the end of July with a view to seeking the views of the LAPTC as to the training needs of parish councils and how these could best be met. It was the view of Members that such training should be directed to the Clerk or Chairman of Parish Councils.

Resolved unanimously:

That the report be noted.

6 SIXTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Monitoring Officer presented a report that requested Members to nominate a Member of the Committee to attend the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees.

It was proposed by Councillor Shirley Burns and seconded by Councillor Janie Kirkman:

“That Tony James be nominated to attend the Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees in Birmingham on the 15th and 16th October 2007, as a representative of this Committee.”

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the proposition, whereupon the Chairman declared the proposition to be carried.

Resolved unanimously:

That Tony James be nominated to attend the Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees in Birmingham on the 15th and 16th October 2007, as a representative of this Committee.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 10.35 a.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Sharon Marsh, Democratic Services - telephone (01524) 582096 or email
smarsh@lancaster.gov.uk**