

## Standards Committee

A meeting of Standards Committee was held on Thursday, 28th August, 2008.

**Present:** Mr F W Hayes (Chairman), Cllr Paul Baker, Mr T Bowman (Parish Representative), Mrs F Robinson (Independent Member), Joe Craven (Substitute Parish Representative), Chris Nestor (Substitute Independent Member), Roger Mosley (Substitute Parish Representative),

**Officers:** D.E Bond, K Wannop, S Johnson, A Squires (LD)

**Also in attendance:** Cllr John Fletcher

**Apologies:** Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ken Dixon, Mrs E Chapman (Vice-Chairman), Mr C. V Algie (Parish Representative)

### **S       Declarations of Interest**

**59/08**

Roger Mosley declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in the item entitled Attendance at Town/Parish Council Meetings as he was a Member of Thornaby Town Council.

### **S       Attendance at Town/Parish Council Meetings**

**60/08**

Consideration was given to a report relating to Attendance at Town/Parish Council Meetings.

Members were reminded that as part of the Ethical Governance Light Touch Health Check Action Plans it had been agreed that Members of the Standards Committee would attend and observe Town/Parish Council meetings, with a view to reporting back to the following Standards Committee meeting on what they had witnessed. Attending such meetings would, in particular, have the benefit of raising the Committee's and Committee Member's profile at a parish level, and also provide Committee Members with a greater awareness of, and insight into Town/Parish Councils and Councillors' work and vice versa.

Mr T Bowman and Mr F Hayes attended the 29 July 2008 meeting of Thornaby Town Council. Details of their assessment of the meeting were circulated for consideration and a response was agreed for the purposes of feedback to the town council.

Members were also provided with an update of future Town/Parish Council meetings and were asked to indicate if they could attend any of the dates.

RESOLVED that the Director of Law and Democracy formulates a letter to the clerk of the town council for the agreement of the Chairman, in order to provide feedback on the Standards Committee's Members observations at the recent town council meeting.

### **S       Members' and Officers' Gifts and Hospitality**

**61/08**

Members considered a report that provided details of the procedures relating to Members' and Officers' gifts and hospitality and provided examples of some of

the returns submitted during the first quarter of the year (1 April 2008 - 30 June 2008).

Members were informed that the Members' Register had again been reviewed and attached for members consideration were details of some of the gifts/hospitality received by Members during in the first quarter of the year.

Members were also informed that a further review had been undertaken of the Officers' gifts and hospitality register and again examples of details submitted during the first quarter of the year were provided.

RESOLVED that the information be noted

**S  
62/08**      **Members' and Officers' Interests**

Members considered a report that updated the Committee regarding Members' and Officers' interests.

Members were informed that a recent reminder about updating interests on the Member's register had been circulated and details of required changes had been received.

Members were informed that the reminder also covered co-optees and their register details.

The Committee noted that a (Monitoring Officer) register inspection had taken place on 4 June. Actions arising were limited, with reminders about three overdue returns being required.

Members were also reminded of the related third party disclosures process which had been referred to at the 8 May meeting. Completed returns had now been received from 49 members. This had been a very positive outcome.

RESOLVED that the information be noted

**S  
63/08**      **Local Assessment - Case Studies**

The Committee considered two case studies from an LGG Local Assessment Workshop.

Members of the Committee considered the two allegations and provided their views on whether there had been an apparent breach of the code and, if so, whether they considered that further action was necessary.

RESOLVED that the information be noted

**S  
64/08**      **Local Assessment Framework**

The Committee was asked to consider the following reports regarding the local Assessment Framework:

- Assessment Sub-Committee Minutes – 29 July 2008 meeting
- Standards Board Press Release – Local Authorities tackling complaints about

members

- Referral to the Monitoring Officer for Other Action – Guidance Note
- Hearings Sub-Committee – Terms of Reference
- Members Code of Conduct – Alleged Breaches – Protocols:-
  - (a)Monitoring Officer
  - (b)Legal Advice
- LGC article – Implications of locals assessment procedure
- Standards Board Press Toolkit – What to say and when

RESOLVED that

1. The information be noted
2. The Hearing Sub-Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

**S**  
**65/08**      **Information/Discussion Items**

Members were asked to note/consider the following reports:

- Annual Report of Standards Committee 2007/2008
- Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer 2007/2008
- Local Government Ombudsman CLAE liaison meeting notes
- CLG Consultation – Communities in Control: Real Power, Real People
- APE Appeals Tribunal Decision – South Kesteven District Council
- Weightmans – Ethical Standards Clinic – August 2008

Copies of the Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2007/2008 and the Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer 2007/2008 were circulated to the Committee Members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted/received.

**S**  
**66/08**      **Standards Committee Forward Plan 2008/09**

Consideration was given to the updated version of the Standards Committee Forward Plan.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee Forward Plan be noted/received.