

Standards Committee

A meeting of Standards Committee was held on Friday, 19th December, 2008.

Present: Mrs E Chapman (Chairman), Mr C.V Algie (Parish Representative), Cllr Paul Baker, Mr T Bowman (Parish Representative), Mr R Mosley (Substitute Parish Representative)

Officers: D.E Bond, A Squires, M Henderson, C Lunn (LD)

Also in attendance: Cllr John Fletcher

Apologies: Mr F W Hayes (Independent), Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Mrs F Robinson (Independent), Cllr Ken Dixon

S Declarations of Interest

95/08

There were no declarations of interest.

S Minutes of the meetings held on 25th September 2008 and 23rd October 2008

96/08

The minutes of the meetings held on 25th September 2008 and 23rd October 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

S Consideration Sub Committee Minutes

97/08

Members received minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October 2008.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

S Assessment Sub Committee Minutes

98/08

Members received the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2008.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

S Comments, Complaints and Commendations - First and Second Quarters - 2008/09

99/08

Consideration was given to a report that gave details of comments, complaints and commendations for the first and second quarters of 2008/09.

Members were informed that during the first and second quarters of 2008/09 (April 2008 to September 2008 inclusive), the Authority had received 422 complaints (compared to 401 in the same period in 2007/08), and 786 commendations (compared to 825 in the same period in 2007/08).

Members received the breakdown by service of these complaints and commendations.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that some of the main messages for the year were as follows:-

- Almost 87% of complaints were in relation to CESC, DNS and Tristar.
- Of the total commendations almost 90% were received for CESC and DNS, with almost 56% of these being compliments for DNS.
- Within CESC, Children and Young People's Services had generated the most complaints and the majority of compliments were within Adults' Services.
- Within DNS, Direct Services and Community Protection received the most complaints, and most commendations were within the Direct Services area (refuse collection, highways, street cleansing and recycling).

Members noted that a recent survey of the Borough's residents indicated that people were more satisfied than ever before with the way the Council was running the Borough and with the way services were provided.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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100/08 **Attendance at Council Meetings**

The Committee was informed that the following meeting had been attended:-

Housing and Community Safety Select Committee, 18 December 2008 – attended by Francis Hayes and Christopher Nestor. Feedback would be provided at a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee was asked to consider potential future Council meetings that could be attended; in particular one volunteer was sought to attend a forthcoming Planning Committee meeting in February 2009 – a volunteer to be confirmed.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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101/08 **The Committee on Standards in Public Life**

The Committee considered a report that provided details of Public Attitudes on Standards of Conduct in Public Life, a survey undertaken on behalf of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The report highlighted the key outcomes of the survey, together with press notification of an impending inquiry by the Committee regarding the relationship between public trust and the leadership structures and models in local Government.

It was noted that the Monitoring Officer would report the findings of this inquiry to the Committee at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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102/08** **Codes of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees - A
Consultation**

The Committee was provided with the following views on the questions posed in Annex A of 'Codes of conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees – A Consultation':-

- Standards Committee
- Human Resources Strategy Group (HRSG)
- Cabinet
- Audit Committee.

Members were directed to questions 17, 18, 21 and 22 in order to consider the varying viewpoints put forward by the Committee and the HRSG, together with the responses made by the Council's Cabinet and Audit Committee.

The Committee was provided with a copy of the proposed response to Communities and Local Government, based on these views.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and the proposed response agreed.

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103/08** **Local Assessment - Case Studies**

The Committee considered one case study (separated into two exercises - part 1 and part 2) from the recent Standards Committees' Assembly.

Members of the Committee considered and discussed the scenarios 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 received.

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104/08** **Local Assessment Framework**

The Committee received and considered the following information in relation to the Local Assessment Framework:-

1. Complaints Procedure Note
2. a. Revised Assessment Sub-Committee Terms of Reference
 b. Revised Review Sub-Committee Terms of Reference
 c. Revised Monitoring Officer Protocol
3. Comments from meetings of Standards Board and ACSeS
4. Weightmans Ethical Standards Clinic – November 2008
5. The Case Tribunals (England) Regulations 2008

6. Assessment/Review Sub-Committee Meetings – Administrative Arrangements

With regard to the revised Terms of Reference, the Committee discussed the requirement that the Monitoring Officer should report back to the Sub Committee, within 3 months, in situations where it had requested him to undertake other action, e.g. arranging training, conciliation, etc. Members noted that the requirement to report back would not apply where there was a decision to ask the Monitoring Officer to carry out an investigation.

The revised Terms of Reference and Monitoring Officer protocol were agreed and the other information was noted.

RESOLVED that the information be noted/approved as appropriate.

S **Information/Discussion Items** **105/08**

The Committee considered the following reports:-

1. Seventh Annual Assembly of Standards Committees – Delivering the Goods - 13 and 14 October 2008 - Further information from the Assembly.
2. Case Review: 2008 Digest
3. APE 0407 – West Sussex County Council
4. Standards Board Press Release – 20 November 2008
5. Tees Valley Standards Committees – Development Programme 2008/09
6. Positive Engagement – A guide for planning Councillors – updated version.

Noted that the guide for planning Councillors would be made available to relevant members.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

S **Standards Committee Forward Plan 2008/09** **106/08**

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

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