

## Standards Committee

A meeting of Standards Committee was held on Thursday, 9th April, 2009.

**Present:** Mr F W Hayes(Chairman), Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Ken Dixon, Mr C.V Algie(Parish Representative), Mr T Bowman(Parish Representative), Mrs F Robinson(Independent), Mr R Mosley (Substitute Parish Representative), Mr C. Nestor(Substitute Independent)

**Officers:** D.E Bond, A. Squires, N. Hart, K. Wannop(LD)

**Also in attendance:** None

**Apologies:** Mrs E Chapman, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr John Fletcher(Substitute Member), Cllr Andrew Sherris

### **S       Declarations of Interest**

**1/09**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **S       The Standards Committee's Annual Report 2008/09**

**2/09**

The Committee considered and commented on the Annual Report for 2008/09.

The report included an overview of the work of the Committee in the past year, identified and promoted examples of best practice, and outlined the Committee's statutory responsibilities( which had increased as a result of local assessment).

Members were informed that consultation on the report was in process of being undertaken with other officers, the relevant Cabinet Member; the Head of Legal Services as Deputy Monitoring Officer; the Head of Democratic Services; the Corporate Management Team (including the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service and the Corporate Director of Resources as Section 151 Officer) and the Corporate Governance Working Group which included the Chief Internal Auditor. Subject to the outcome of this process, it was proposed that the Director of Law and Democracy be authorised to finalise the report in consultation with the Chairman.

The report would also be submitted to the Audit Committee, Cabinet and Council .

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Director of Law and Democracy be authorised to finalise the Report, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, following the conclusion of the consultation specified in the Committee Report; and
2. That the final version of the Annual Report be brought to the attention of all Members of the Council and also be brought back to a future meeting of the Standards Committee for information.

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

**3/09**

Members considered a report that provided details of the procedures which related to Members' and Officers' gifts and hospitality and the returns submitted

for each during the final quarter of the year (1 January 2009 - 31 March 2009)

The Committee was informed that the Members' Register had again been reviewed and examples were provided of gifts/hospitality received by Members during this period alongside the review findings.

A further review had also been undertaken of the Officers' gifts and hospitality register. Details of the findings were considered alongside examples of gifts/hospitality received by officers.

it was noted that the Council's new Contract Procedure Rules contained specific provisions about bribery and corruption, the details of which were submitted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**S**  
**4/09**      **Members' and Officers' Interests**

Consideration was given to a report that updated the Committee regarding Members' and Officers' interests.

Members were informed that reminders about updating interests on the Member's register continued to be circulated. The most recent reminder was sent on 17 December 2008. A further reminder was to be sent following the annual meeting on 1st April. The reminders also covered co-optees and their register details and parish clerks on behalf of their Councillors. Reminders were last sent to co-optees on 17 December 2008 and parish clerks on 22 July 2008. Advice about interests continued to be provided before Cabinet and Council meetings and on an ad hoc basis when required. Examples of recent declarations made by Members were submitted.

The Committee was informed that a (Monitoring Officer) register inspection took place on 30 March 2009. Details of actions arising were also considered. Officers were last asked to review and update their register details on 24 March 2009. Example declarations of interest by Officers were attached.

Updates to Town/Parish Council registers were received fairly regular and advice about declarations of interest continued to be provided to Town/Parish Council Clerks when requested or considered necessary.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**S**  
**5/09**      **Monitoring Officer Work Programme - 2008/09 - End of Year Report**

The Committee was provided with a report that informed Members of the year end position statement regarding the progress in fulfilling the Monitoring Officer Work Programme for 2008/09. The programme was referred to in the previous progress report to the Committee on 23 October last year, and any changes made since were highlighted in red.

RESOLVED that the progress against the Monitoring Officer Work Programme be noted.

**S**      **Standards Board for England - Standards and Ethics - Good Practice**

**6/09**

The Committee was provided with some details of the ideas and innovations that had worked well for the six authorities shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle ("LGC") Standards and Ethics award, supported by the Standards Board ("SBE") Details were also provided of some of the work which this Committee and the Council itself had undertaken in order to achieve and maintain high standards.

It was suggested that the Committee should in the future examine new areas of activity that might be undertaken, as advocated by the authorities shortlisted by the LGC.

RESOLVED that

1. The report be noted
2. Consideration be given at a future meeting of the Committee to new areas of best practice that could be undertaken, as advocated by the authorities shortlisted by the LGC

**S  
7/09**

### **Local Assessment - Case Studies**

Members were asked to consider a Case Study. The Committee considered and discussed a summary of an investigation report and provided their views on what decisions they would make. The Committee also gave their views on how their decision might change under different circumstances.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

**S  
8/09**

### **Local Assessment Framework**

The Committee was asked to consider the following information regarding the Local Assessment Framework:-

1. Local Assessment training documentation - Members were informed that this document would be distributed to all political groups and a copy would be placed in the Members Library.
2. Key points arising from the ACSes/SBE meeting on 13 March 2009 - The Committee were informed further guidance on bullying and confidentiality was to be issued but timescales were unknown.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

**S  
9/09**

### **Information/Discussion Items**

Members of the Committee considered the following items:-

1. Local Government Ombudsman - Council First Procedure
2. Town and Parish Standard - February 2009
3. Observing Council Meetings - dates of

- Planning Committee
- Cabinet
- Council

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

**S**  
**10/09**

**Standards Committee Forward Plan 2008/2010**

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

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