

Standards Committee

A meeting of Standards Committee was held on Thursday, 7th May, 2009.

Present: Mr F W Hayes(Chairman), Mrs E Chapman(Vice-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), Cllr Terry Laing (Substitute Member), Cllr John Fletcher(Substitute Member)

Officers: P. McCann(Xentrall),I. Jones(RES),D.E.Bond, A. Squires, P. Bell, K.Wannop(LD)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Ian Dalgarno

S Declarations of Interest

11/09

There were no declarations of interest.

S Consideration Sub Committee Minutes for Meeting held on 15th April 2009.

12/09

Members received minutes of a meeting held on 15th April 2009.

S Alleged Breaches of Members IT Protocol - Procedure

13/09

The Committee considered a report regarding the acceptable use protocols governing Members use of ICT facilities provided to them by the Council , which had been in place for a number of years, as set out in the documents; Protocol on the Use of IT Equipment and Members Guide to Information Security.

The protocols were supported by a formally approved procedure for dealing with alleged breaches by Members. This procedure included a mechanism for Members to appeal against any proposed actions to be taken in response to these breaches. Any appeals would be heard by the Assessment Sub-Committee.

Recent incidents and subsequent investigations had identified deficiencies in the existing procedure, in that it did not adequately consider and set out actions to be taken in response to breaches, and how those actions should be managed.

The procedure had been reviewed to address those deficiencies and to better inform Members of the potential consequences of breaches of the protocols.

RECOMMENDED that the revised procedure for dealing with alleged breaches of the protocols as set out in the report be approved.

S Internal Audit Report - March 2009

14/09

Consideration was given to a report that advised Standards Committee Members of the work carried out by the Internal Audit Section in one audit within the remit of the Committee during the quarter January to March 2009. Also included in this report was the statutory Internal Audit opinion statement on the Council's control environment.

Members were reminded that Internal Audit was an independent appraisal function established by the Council to objectively examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy of internal controls. This role ensured that there was proper economic, efficient and effective use of resources. It also ensured that the Council had adequate accounting records and control systems.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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15/09 **The Monitoring Officer's Annual Report 2008/09**

Members considered a report that provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment upon the draft Monitoring Officer's Annual Report for 2008/09.

The Committee was asked to consider and provide any comments on the draft, in order to inform the final version. The Committee's comments on the work programme outcomes would also be welcomed. It was suggested that at paragraph 6.1, it should be made clear that during the year the Committee had been expanded to include a substitute independent member, substitute parish representatives and a substitute member panel.

Consultation was currently ongoing regarding the draft Report 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. It was also noted that the draft 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 subject to the comments made by the Committee, 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 is brought to the attention of all Members of the Council and was also brought back to a future meeting of the Standards Committee for information.

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16/09 **Local Assessment - Case Studies**

Members were asked to consider two Case Studies. The Committee considered and discussed a summary of an investigation report and provided their views on what decisions they would make.

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17/09 **Local Assessment Framework**

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

1. Code of Conduct – Personal Interests – Voting Co-opted Members – Advice.
2. Code of Conduct Investigations - statistics
3. Training

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

S **Information/Discussion Items**

18/09

Members of the Committee considered the following items:-

1. Current Standards Committee Membership
2. Members' Indemnities/Insurance Arrangements (All current committee members were included in the cover provided by the council)
3. Standards Committee – Standards/Probity Survey (Obtaining base data about public trust, was being considered as an initial step)
4. Annual Governance Statement
5. Local Government Ombudsman – Provisional Statistics – 2008/09
6. Audit Committee Work Programme 2009/10
7. Standards Board for England - Bulletin 43

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

S **Standards Committee Forward Plan 2008/10**

19/09

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

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