

Standards Committee

A meeting of Standards Committee was held on Friday, 20th November, 2009.

Present: Mr M Armstrong(In the Chair), Mrs E Chapman(Independent), Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr David Coleman, Mr C.V Algie(Parish Representative), Mr T Bowman(Parish Representative), Mr C Nestor(Substitute Independent), Mr R Mosley(Substitute Parish Representative), Mr R Rowlinson(Substitute Parish Representative), Cllr John Fletcher(Substitute Elected Member)

Officers: Mr I Jones(RES), Mr D E Bond, Mr A Squires, Miss K Wannop(LD)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Mr F W Hayes, Cllr Ken Dixon

S Declarations of Interest

75/09

There were no declarations of interest.

S Assessment Sub Committee Minutes for meetings held on 5th October 76/09 2009 and 16th October 2009

Members received the minutes of the meetings held on 5th October 2009 and 16th October 2009.

S Internal Audit Report

77/09

The Committee considered 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 July to September 2009.

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.

The Chief Internal Auditor presented the Committee with details of an audit relating to the Employee Protection Register and the recommendations which had been made.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

S Assessment Made Clear - DVD

78/09

The Committee watched a DVD, Assessment made clear, which took Members through the main stages of local assessment, exploring important or contentious issues along the way. The stages were pre-assessment, assessment, decision and review.

The programme featured learning points which appeared throughout the drama. The learning points identified the criteria to guide Assessment Sub-Committees' decisions, including what to take into account before referring a complaint for local investigation or to Standards for England, when taking no action on a

complaint, or considering other action.

Members then discussed the content of the DVD and agreed that it had been very helpful.

RESOLVED that the information be received.

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79/09 **Focus on Code Changes**

Consideration was given to a report that provided details of anticipated changes to the current code of conduct for local authority members and provided details of a case study for consideration under the provisions of the present code and under the likely provisions of the proposed new code.

RESOLVED that the information be received.

S
80/09 **Understanding Predetermination and Bias**

The Committee considered a report that provided details of a checklist presented at the 2009 Annual Assembly of Standards Committees by Simon Bird QC, Deputy President of the Adjudication Panel for England. A case study was also included for the Committee to consider, taking into account the checklist.

RESOLVED that the information be received.

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81/09 **Observing Council Meetings**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an opportunity for Members' comments about their attendance at recent Council meetings to be provided and discussed.

Licensing Committee - 10th November 2009 - attended by Francis Hayes and Chris Nestor

Executive Scrutiny Committee - 20th October 2009 - attended by Francis Hayes and Tom Bowman

Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusions Select Committee - 27th October 2009 - attended by Francis Hayes and Tom Bowman

Members received the assessment sheets from the meetings. It was agreed that based on the Members' observations feedback be provided to the relevant Chairs and Officers.

RESOLVED that

1. The information be received.

2. Feedback, as discussed, be provided to the relevant Chairs and Officers.

3. Members inform the Councils Monitoring Officer of outstanding meeting dates which they could attend.

**S
82/09** **Attendance at Town/Parish Council Meetings**

The Committee considered a report that provided a further opportunity for Members' feedback on their attendance at Town/Parish Council Meetings held since the last Committee meeting.

Wolviston Parish Council - 21st October 2009 - attended by Francis Hayes and Chris Nestor.

Members received and discussed the assessment sheets from the above Parish Council meeting.

RESOLVED that

1. The information be received
2. Feedback, as discussed, be provided to the relevant Chairs and Officers.
3. Members inform the Councils Monitoring Officer of outstanding meeting dates which they could attend.

**S
83/09** **Observing Local Strategic Partnership Meetings**

The Committee was provided with dates of Local Strategic Partnership meetings and they were asked to inform the Monitoring Officer if they could attend any of the meetings as observers.

RESOLVED that Members inform the Councils Monitoring Officer of the outstanding meeting dates which they could attend.

**S
84/09** **Standards Committee Forward Plan 2008/2010**

Consideration was given to the updated version of the Standards Committee Forward Plan. Members were again asked to consider whether there were other matters which should be included in the programme for future meetings. Members also received the Councils Statutory Forward Plan.

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