

## Standards Committee

A meeting of Standards Committee was held on Friday, 18th December, 2009.

**Present:** Mr F W Hayes(Chairman), Mrs E Chapman(Independent), Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Mr T Bowman(Parish Representative), Mr R Mosley (Substitute Parish Representative), Cllr John Fletcher(Substitute Elected Member)

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

**Also in attendance:** None

**Apologies:** Mr M Armstrong(Vice-Chair), Cllr Ken Dixon, Mr C Nestor(Substitute Independent Member)

### **S**      **Declarations of Interest**

**85/09**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **S**      **Minutes of the Meetings held on 22nd October 2009**

**86/09**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2009 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **S**      **Assessment Sub Committee Minutes for Meeting held on 18th November 2009**

**87/09**

Members received the Assessment Sub Committee minutes for the meeting held on 18th November 2009.

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

**88/09**

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.

Kirklevington and Castle Levington Parish Council - 9th December 2009 - attended by Tom Bowman and Roger Mosley

Preston-on-Tees Parish Council - 14th December 2009 - attended by Edna Chapman and Roger Mosley

Redmarshall Parish Council - 14th December 2009 - attended by Francis Hayes and Tom Bowman

Members received and discussed assessment sheets/comments from the above Parish Council meetings and agreed the appropriate feedback.

RESOLVED that

1. The information be received

2. Feedback, as discussed, be provided to the relevant clerks.

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

### **S**      **Observing Council Meetings**

**89/09**

The Committee were made aware that there was no assessment sheets to discuss. Details of observations of the Health Select Committee held on 14th December would be deferred to the next meeting.

Members were reminded to inform the Monitoring Officer of any outstanding meeting dates which they could attend.

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

**S  
90/09**

### **Observing Local Strategic Partnership Meetings**

The Committee considered a report that provided an opportunity for Members who had attended meetings of the Local Strategic Partnership ("LSP") as observers, to report back on what they had observed regarding conduct and procedures at the meetings.

Central Area Partnership - 17th December 2009 - attended by Tom Bowman and Francis Hayes

Members received and discussed the assessment sheets from the above attended meeting and agreed feedback to the relevant officers/Chair.

RESOLVED that

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

**S  
91/09**

### **Complaints, Compliments, Commendations and Comments - Second Quarter 2009/10**

Members considered a report that provided details of complaints, compliments, commendations and comments for the period July - September 2009.

The Committee were informed that the Authority had received 236 complaints which compared to 209 for the same period last year and 438 compliments and 116 commendations which compared to 435 commendations in the same period last year. Breakdowns by service area of these figures were provided, together with key messages arising from the details.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

**S  
92/09**

### **Focus on Code Changes**

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

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

**S**            **Understanding Predetermination and Bias**

**93/09**

The Committee considered a further report regarding predetermination and bias and was again provided with 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 further case study was also included for the Committee to consider, taking into account the checklist.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

**S**            **Local Assessment Framework**

**94/09**

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

1. Local Assessment - Other Action Procedure Note - this was agreed.
2. Assessment Sub-Committee Terms of Reference - Revised - this was agreed.
3. Review Sub-Committee Terms of Reference - Revised - this was agreed.
4. Code of Conduct Complaint Form - Revised - this was agreed.
5. Members Code of Conduct Complaint Procedure - Revised - this was agreed.
6. Guidance Note for Potential Complainants - Revised - this was agreed.
7. Consideration Sub-Committee Terms of Reference - Revised - this was agreed.
8. Local Assessment Training - this was noted

RESOLVED that the information be agreed/noted, as indicated.

**S**            **Information/Discussion Items**

**95/09**

Members of the Committee considered the following items:-

1. Minutes of Tees Valley Independent Standards Committee Members Meeting - 19 October 2009
2. Stockton-on-Tees Town/Parish Clerks' Meetings - 27 October and 3 November 2009 - Minutes
3. Bullying and the Code - Standards for England Advice
4. Disclosing Confidential Information - Standards for England Advice
5. Lobbying - Standards for England Advice

RESOLVED that the information be received.

**S**  
**96/09**

**Standards Committee Forward Plan 2008/2011**

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.