

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 29 March 2010

<u>Present:</u>		Brian Cummings (Chair)	
	Councillors	C Blakeley A Bridson L Fraser K Hayes	A McLachlan C Meaden C Tegg P Williams
<u>Deputies</u>	Councillors	D Roberts (In place of WJ Davies)	
<u>Independent Members</u>		Alex Nuttall Stella Elliott	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	Ken Harrison	

22 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were. No such declarations were made.

23 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January, 2010.

Further to minute 19 (Attendance at Meetings), Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, referred to other council commitments and the need to attend meetings elsewhere which had prevented him from attending meetings of this committee. He explained that there were no known conflicts with other principal council committee meetings in next year's committee calendar and he would attend as many Standards Committee meetings as possible.

Resolved –

That the minutes be received.

24 STANDARDS COMMITTEE - ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Further to minute 20 (25/1/2010) the Chair asked if there was any response from the political groups on his discussion paper.

Resolved - That this matter be deferred until the June meeting of this committee to allow further discussion within the political groups.

25 ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted a report which incorporated a copy of a research document commissioned by Standards for England which centred on nine areas of notable practice for local Standards Committees.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

26 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN PERFORMANCE REVIEW - APRIL TO DECEMBER 2009

The Director of Finance submitted a report providing a summary of council performance in dealing with enquiries received from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), covering the period 01 April 2009 to 31 December 2009 as well as the last comparator period with other North West Authorities.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

27 STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND - ONLINE GUIDES

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted a report which incorporated copies of the following on-line guides produced by Standards for England which supplement the existing guidance on the Members' Code of Conduct:

- Bullying and the Code of Conduct
- Disclosing Confidential information
- Freemasons and the Code of Conduct
- Gifts, Hospitality and the Code of Conduct
- Independent Members
- Lobbying
- Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Resolved –

(1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the on-line guides be circulated to all members of the Council.

28 USE OF RECORDING MEDIA AT MEETINGS AND IN COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted a report giving consideration to the possible standards implications of recording media in Council buildings, whether during Council meetings or at other times.

The views of the Standards Committee were sought as to whether the use of recording media by Members within Council buildings should remain unregulated; or

whether it should be prohibited (or subject to other controls) by way of a local protocol to be incorporated in the Council's Constitution.

It was moved by Councillor Blakeley and seconded by Councillor Fraser that:

“ (1) Council should adopt an additional Standing Order to formalise the common law powers of the Mayor (or Chair) to control the conduct of a meeting, including the use of recording media; and

(2) The use of recording media by Members within Council buildings should be prohibited.”

It was moved as an amendment by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor McLachlan that the motion be amended by the deletion of paragraph (2) and the substitution of the following:

“ (2) That the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, be asked to report back to the June meeting of this committee on the results of his enquiries with other local authorities regarding this matter, and that he provide more fully worked up proposals as a way forward.”

The amendment was put and carried (9:3)

The motion, as now amended, was put and carried (9:0) (3absts)

Resolved –

(1) That Council should adopt an additional Standing Order to formalise the common law powers of the Mayor (or Chair) to control the conduct of a meeting, including the use of recording media; and

(2) That the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, be asked to report back to the June meeting of this committee on the results of his enquiries with other local authorities regarding this matter, and that he provide more fully worked up proposals as a way forward.