

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 2 December 2010

<u>Present:</u>	Brian Cummings (Chair)	
	Councillors	A Bridson K Hayes
		AER Jones R Wilkins
<u>Deputies</u>	Councillors	J Hale (In place of L Rowlands) J Keeley (In place of C Blakeley) P Davies (In place of C Meaden) J Stapleton (In place of WJ Davies) P Gilchrist (In place of P Williams)
<u>Independent Members</u>	Alex Nuttall	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	Ken Harrison Stella Elliott

14 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.

Councillor A Jones declared a personal interest in respect of minute 16 (Freedom of Information Requests) by virtue of him currently pursuing a freedom of information request.

15 MINUTES

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September, 2010.

Resolved –

(1) That the minutes be received.

(2) That the report concerning use of Recording Media at Meetings be referred back to the next meeting of this committee.

16 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION(FOI) REQUESTS

Further to minute 13 (29/9/210) the Director of Finance presented a further report including a breakdown of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests that were received

in 2009/10, figures from neighbouring Local Authorities, and analysis of the FOI requests, which were recorded on a central register and held in calendar year format.

Resolved - That the report be noted and that Jane Corrin, Information Manager, be asked to make a presentation to the next meeting of this committee outlining the key points in her report.

17 CHAIR'S DISCUSSION PAPER - RESPONSE FROM POLITICAL GROUPS

Further to minute 3 (21/6/2010) the Chair asked if there was any response from the political groups on his discussion paper.

Resolved – That this matter be deferred until the next meeting of this committee to allow a response from the political groups.

18 CHAIR'S DISCUSSION ITEM - HOW TO IMPROVE CONDUCT AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the proceedings of the Standards Hearing Panel on 22 November, 2010 when consideration was given to the report of the Investigating Officer concerning complaint reference SfE 2009/04. The report dealt with a complaint against an individual councillor at a Council meeting on 13 July, 2009 but also drew attention to problems relating to the behaviour of other councillors at that same meeting which may also have brought the Council into disrepute. The Chair commented on the public's perception of such behaviour and asked for this matter to be referred to the political groups reminding members of the requirement to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

19 STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND - ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted a report which incorporated copies of on-line guides produced by Standards for England on (a) Blogging, and; (b) a Quick guide for Dual – hatted members.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

20 STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND BULLETIN NO 48

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted Standards for England Bulletin no 48 covering:

- The future of Standards for England and the Standards Framework;
- Monitoring Returns
- Acceptance of Complaints by SfE
- Reappointment of independent members
- The Future of the Standards Forum

Resolved – That content of the bulletin be noted.

21 **NEW PROCEDURE FOR STANDARDS COMPLAINTS**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted a report seeking approval to a local protocol on local assessment and investigation of allegations of misconduct by members. The aim of the local protocol was to improve the manner in which such allegations and complaints are handled and processed.

Resolved - That: this matter be deferred until the next meeting of this committee to allow members to consider the detail of the new Protocol.