

STANDARD COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Standards Committee was held on 12 June 2007.

PRESENT: G Fell (Chair)
Councillors Davison, Kerr, Majid, McPartland and Williams
Parish Council Member: Councillor I Bruce

OFFICIALS: M Braithwaite, C Davies, R G Long and D Robinson

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf Councillor Ward and Mr Anderson.

****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

****MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 March 2007 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

INDEPENDENT MEMBER RESIGNATION

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services reported that due to personal work commitments, Mrs Donna Middleton, Independent member of the committee had tendered her resignation from the committee. The Director advised that he had already written to Mrs Middleton on behalf of the committee to thank her for her services.

ORDERED that Mrs Middleton's resignation be noted and that arrangements be made to fill the vacancy.

ROLE OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE / ADOPTION OF CODE OF CONDUCT

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services informed Members that the Council at its meeting on 23 May 2007, had adopted the new Model Code of Conduct which came into force on 3 May 2007. The Director gave a slide presentation on the Code of Conduct that highlighted the main differences between the previous Code and acquainted Members with the requirements of the revised Code including its implications for Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees. In addition, primarily for the benefit of new members, he outlined the role of the Standards Committee and its purpose in leading on and upholding ethical standards and probity within the Council.

Members were advised that one of the main changes arising from the Section 12.2 of the Code provided the opportunity for Members to attend and speak at a meeting, even if they had declared a personal and prejudicial interest.

Copies of the guidance issued by the Standards Board for England were made available at the meeting and would be circulated to all elected, co-opted and independent members of the Council together with a shorter pocket guide.

ORDERED that the Council's adoption of the new Code of Conduct be noted.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2006/2007 AND 2007/2008

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services presented a report setting out details of work undertaken by the Committee during the year 2006/7 and provided a list of possible topics for future consideration during 2007/2008. In addition to those matters within the current work programme which would be rolled over from the previous year, Members were asked whether they wished to identify addition areas on which they wished add to the programme.

ORDERED that the following items rolled over from 2006/2007 form the work programme for 2007/2008 and that Members advise the Director of Legal and Democratic Services of any further issues to be considered:

Annual Ombudsman's Report
Review of Gifts and Hospitality Register
Training for Standards Hearings – Mock Hearings
Training for Co-opted/Parish Council Members – Ethics /Code of Conduct
Code of Conduct for Employees
Review of Corporate Governance
Review of Member/Officer Protocol
CPA Outcome
Review of Officer Scheme of Delegation
Adjudication Panel and Standards Boards Decisions

LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003 AND GAMBLING ACT 2005- MEMBERS' PROTOCOLS

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report enclosing copies of the intended protocols to be used by Members of the Licensing Sub-Committees when dealing with licensing applications and reviews under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005.

The protocols explained the sub-committee's functions under both act; the rules on decision making; the factors the sub-committees should take into consideration before making a decision; rules on bias; predetermination; personal and prejudicial interests; and the procedures to be followed at hearings.

ORDERED that the protocols for Licensing Sub-Committee Hearings be approved.

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2006/2007

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted for approval, a draft copy of the committee's first Annual Report which detailed the areas of work conducted by the committee during 2006/2007 and which highlighted relevant issues for 2007/2008. Members' views were requested in relation to any additional matters they may wish to include prior to submission to Council.

ORDERED that the draft report be approved for circulation to the next Council meeting.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Dates for future meetings of the committee were reported as follows:

Tuesday 11 September 2007, 10.00 a.m.

Tuesday 11 December 2007, 10.00 a.m.

Tuesday 11 March 2008, 10.00 a.m. not 9.00 a.m. as indicated on the agenda.

6TH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES – CONFERENCE

Reference was made to the above conference to be held in Birmingham on 15/16 October 2007. Members reconfirmed authorisation for attendance by the Chair.

NOTED AND APPROVED