

# Standards Committee Minutes

Date: 7 June 2011

Time: 6.15 - 6.30 pm

**PRESENT:** Mr B Morgan-Timms (in the Chair)

Revd G Hargrove, District Councillor J A Savage, Parish Councillors J Sherlock & Mrs V Smith and District Councillor Ms J D Wassell,

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor D Banfield, D J Carroll, Mrs G A Jones, Sainsbury and Springford

## 1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman) from the meeting both of whom had submitted their apologies, it was

**RESOLVED:** That Mr B Morgan-Timms be appointed as Chairman for the Meeting.

## 2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 March 2011 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

## 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 4 RE-APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee had before it a report outlining the requirements to appoint sub-committees to deal with Local Standards Complaints Initial Assessments, Reviews of 'no further action' decisions and Local Standards Hearings and other standards issues.

At its meeting on 6 May 2008 the Standards Committee had resolved to form a pool of all Members of the Committee to sit on these sub-committees. These appointments were made until the Annual Council meeting in 2011.

Despite the proposed abolition of Standards Committee, the local assessment regime and 'Standards for England' as set out in the Localism Bill, it was necessary for the three sub-committees to be reappointed until the next Annual Council

meeting or, if earlier, the date upon which Standards Committees formed under existing legislation are abolished.

It was noted by Members that, as required by Section 55(5) of the Local Government Act 2000, officers had consulted the Parish and Town Councils within the District for which the Committee was responsible on the number of members and their proposed terms of office in respect of the three sub-committees. No comments had been received from such authorities.

The Committee fully endorsed the recommendation before them and;

**RESOLVED:** That

(i) all Members of the Standards Committee (including those appointed after this meeting to any vacancy) form a “pool” of members for meetings of (a) a Complaints Initial Assessment Sub-Committee, (b) a Complaints Review Sub-Committee, and (c) a Local Standards Hearing Panel;

(ii) the Complaints Initial Assessment Sub-Committee, the Complaints Review Sub-Committee and the Local Standards Hearing Panel (to be drawn in each case and on each occasion from the “pool” and with their terms of reference as previously authorised) be appointed until the next Annual Council Meeting or, if earlier, the date upon which Standards Committees formed under existing legislation are abolished, with the same membership as at present, ie one District Council member, one independent member and one Parish Council representative;

(iii) the Committee’s functions in respect of initial assessment be delegated to the Complaints Initial Assessment Sub-Committee, the Committee’s functions in respect of reviews be delegated to the Complaints Review Sub-Committee, and the Committee’s functions in respect of all other local determination matters (including hearings) be delegated to the Local Standards Hearing Panel;

(iv) the selection of members from the “pool” be delegated to the Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services; and

(v) the date, time and venue for meetings of these Sub-Committees be fixed by the Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services.

## **5 MONITORING OF COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS, THIRD AND FOURTH QUARTERS 2010-11**

The meeting noted the extensive report and appendices in respect of Complaints, Comments and Compliments received during the last two quarters of the previous financial year.

The 88.5% of complaints dealt with within the corporate timescales of 10 working days (below the 90% target) for the third quarter was noted along with the figure of 93.5% for the final quarter.

The improvement in feedback logged in respect of complaints was noted along with the impressive number of compliments received over the two quarters, particularly in respect of the Customer Service Centre and Environmental Services section.

The District Solicitor responded to a Member's enquiry as to the presence of any specific issues amongst the data which should be brought to the Committee's attention, by saying that there were no exceptions that gave any particular cause for concern.

**RESOLVED:** That the monitoring of Complaints, Comments and Compliments Report for the Third and Fourth Quarters 2010-11 and the data and charts contained therein be noted.

## **6 TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS 2011/12**

The Committee noted the report and the pertinent factor therein that given the prospective abolition of the Standards Board regime including the Code of Conduct and Standards Committees as currently constituted, there would appear to be little merit in organising large scale training with associated costs.

However given the presence of two new Members on the Committee as from the new Council year it was proposed in the report that two member induction sessions be organised on the Code of Conduct and the current local assessment regime for these Members. Additionally it was suggested, that with the leave of the Chairman, these new Members sit in as observers during at least one Initial Assessment Sub-Committee meeting before taking a full part in that respect.

**RESOLVED:** That the training arrangements for the municipal year 2011/12 as outlined in the report be implemented.

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Chairman

**The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:**

- David Dongray - District Solicitor / Monitoring Officer
- Peter Druce - Democratic Services