

Draft Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held on Monday 21 April 2008 at the Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham

Independent Members: Mr R. Philpott (Chairman)

Parish/Town Council Representatives: Councillors R Fido and G Yates

District Councillors: Councillors CMR Boase, MEM Groom, RF Sanderson and JR Scragg

Officers: P. Jeremiah (Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer) and M. Todd (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

ST40. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Carine.

ST41. Public Question Time/Receipt of Petitions

No public questions or petitions were received.

ST42. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 21 January 2008 were considered.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee, held on 21 January 2008, be approved and signed as a correct record.

ST43. Chairman's Announcements

(a) Local Assessment Regulations

The Chairman informed members that the Regulations regarding local assessment of allegations about the conduct of Councillors had been received on Friday. The Regulations would come into force on 8 May 2008. The five Monitoring Officers in Wiltshire would be working together to produce a standard procedure for dealing with complaints. A special meeting of the Standards Committee would then be arranged as soon as practicable.

(b) Registration of Members' Interests

The Chairman reported that he had written to those Parish Council members who had not yet registered their interests. Responses had now been received from these members and there were now no outstanding registrations.



ST44. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

ST45. Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman

Consideration was given to report no. 6, circulated with the agenda, which provided the Committee with an overview of how complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman about North Wiltshire District Council were dealt with. The report also provided information on the type of complaints made against the Council and the determinations made by the Ombudsman's office.

Resolved that the report be noted.

ST46. Overview of Whistleblowing Policy

An updated version of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy had been approved by the Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee on 3 September 2007. A copy of this policy was attached to the agenda for Members' information.

Resolved that the updated policy be noted.

ST47. Review of Investigations Hearing Process/Local Filtering Arrangements

The Monitoring Officer reported that the five Monitoring Officers in Wiltshire would be meeting to discuss the production of one set of procedures to deal with the local filtering arrangements now that the regulations had been received. It was noted that the Council would have to provide an on-line monthly report on complaints for the Standards Board.

ST48. Benchmarking

Consideration was given to report no. 9, circulated with the agenda, which compared the work being undertaken by the Standards Committee to the work being undertaken by the Standards Committees of other District Councils. It was noted that the work of the North Wiltshire Standards Committee was broadly similar to that undertaken by other equivalent Councils.

Resolved that the report be noted and no change be made to the Committee's work programme or terms of reference.

ST49. Attendance at Standards Committee Annual Conference – 13-14 October 2008

Consideration was given to report no. 10, circulated with the agenda, which considered whether to send representatives to the 7th Annual Assembly of Standards Committees at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham.

Resolved that the Vice Chairman, Mr James Carine, attend the 7th Annual Assembly of Standards Committees and reports back to the Committee.

ST50. Independent Standards Committee Meeting

Consideration was given to report no. 11, circulated with the agenda, which gave details of a meeting of Independent Standards Committee members held on 29 February 2008. The minutes of this meeting were also attached for information.

Resolved that the report be noted.

ST51. Wiltshire Unitary Authority

It was noted that the legal proceedings relating to the unitary authority had now been completed and the formal Order had been made. A meeting between the Standards Committee Chairmen throughout Wiltshire was being arranged to discuss procedures and regulations in preparation for the new authority.

ST52. Work Programme 2008/09

Consideration was given to report no. 13, circulated with the agenda, which set out a future work programme for the Committee.

Resolved that the proposed work programme for 2008/09 be agreed as set out in the Appendix attached to the report.

ST53. Standards Board Bulletin No. 37

The Committee received and noted a copy of the Standards Board Bulletin No. 37.

The meeting started at 7pm and concluded at 7.25pm.

There were no members of the public present.