

Draft Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2006 in Committee Rooms C & D, Level -1, Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham, commencing at 7.00pm

Independent Members: R. Philpott (Chairman)
J. Carine (Vice Chairman)

Parish/Town Council Representatives: Councillors G. Yates and J.R. Scragg

District Councillors: J.R. Ireland

Officers: P. Jeremiah (Legal Team Leader) and J. Whittleton (Policy & Democratic Services Assistant).

ST14. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor C. Reid.

ST15. Public Question Time / Receipt of Petitions

There were no public questions nor petitions received.

ST16. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 24th July 2006.

Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 24th July 2006 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

ST17. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman expressed concern at the poor attendance record of District Council representatives on the Committee.

ST18. Declarations of Interests

None.

ST19. Ken Livingstone Vs The Adjudication Panel for England

Consideration was given to Report No. 6 (circulated with the Agenda) presenting guidance from the Standards Board for England relating to the implications of Ken Livingstone Vs The Adjudication Panel for England case.

Issues discussed included:

- The implications on the boundaries between public and private life.



Resolved that the Report be noted.

ST21. Notes on the Independent Member's Forum

Consideration was given to Report No. 7 (circulated with the Agenda), Notes of the Independent Member's Forum meeting held on the 27th October 2006.

Issues discussed included:

- The potential for an increase in the workload of this Committee;
- That the amendments to the Model Code of Conduct have not gone out for consultation yet; and
- The difficulties of Independent Members at other authorities.

Resolved that the Report be noted.

ST22. Implications of Unitary Authority Status

Consideration was given to Report No. 8 considering the possible application by Wiltshire County Council for Unitary Authority status and the possible implications for the Standards Committee in advising how its responsibilities continue with particular regard to the Town and Parish Councils.

Issues discussed included:

- That if the bid for Unitary status was successful, Wiltshire County Council would become the authority for overseeing standards throughout the area.

Resolved that the issue be placed on the Agenda for a future meeting of the Committee, when more information is known.

ST23. Codes & Protocols Contained Within the Council's Constitution

Consideration was given to Report No.9 (circulated with the Agenda) informing Members of the Codes and Protocols contained with the Constitution of North Wiltshire District Council and how this compares with those contained within the Constitutions of some of the Council's neighbouring authorities.

Issues discussed included:

- Codes & protocols in other authorities.

Resolved that the Media Protocol, Development Control Protocol, Whistle-

blowing Protocol and Officer Code of Conduct be included in the Council's Constitution.

ST24. Bulletin from the Standards Board for England

Bulletin No. 30 from the Standards Board for England was considered by the Committee.

Issues discussed included:

- How the Standards Board would step in if the Standards Committee was not doing its job; and
- That the conference could have easily been contained within one day.

Resolved that consideration be given at the April meeting of the Committee to undertaking a self-assessment survey in accordance with the ethical governance toolkit, produced by the Audit Commission, IDEA and the Standards Board.

ST25. Review of the Code of Conduct

Issues discussed included:

- The timetable for publication of the proposed amendments to the Code of Conduct.

Resolved that an extra meeting be arranged to consider the response to consultation on the proposed changes to the Code of Conduct.

ST26. Review of Terms of Reference

Issues discussed included:

- How to raise the profile of the Committee; and
- District Councillors' attendance.

Resolved that

- 1) That point 8 of the Standards Committee Terms of Reference be amended to refer to points 1-7 as opposed to a-g.
- 2) That no changes be made to the current Terms of Reference.

ST27. Decisions of the Standards Committee Hearing to determine SBE Complaint No. 14558.06 and No. 14559.06

Issues discussed included:

- Whether anonymous complaints should be considered;
- The cost of carrying out a hearing;
- The need to avoid a trial by media; and
- Whether members of the public are able to follow the proceedings of the meeting.

Resolved that that the decisions be noted and that at future Hearings an, inclusive approach is taken to ensure proceedings are understandable for members of the public.

ST28. Standards Committee Membership

Consideration was given to Report No. 14 (circulated with the Agenda) reviewing the composition of the Standards Committee.

Issues discussed included:

- The possibility of having an additional appointment as opposed to a re-appointment.

Resolved that

- (1) The term of office of each of the Independent Members of the Standards Committee be extended for a period of 12 months.
- (2) An additional Independent Member be appointed to the Standards Committee to serve for a three year term expiring in May 2010.
- (3) That a Report on allowances for Standards Committee members be produced for the next scheduled meeting.

The meeting started at 7.00pm and concluded at 7.47pm

There were 0 members of the public present.