

Standards Committee

Thursday, 14 June 2007

Present: Mr Ellwood (Chair), Councillor Alan Cain (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Judith Boothman, Rev John Cree and Mrs Joan Geddes (Parish Council representative)

Officers in attendance: Andrew Docherty (Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)) and Ruth Hawes (Assistant Democratic Services Officer)

07.S.21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Keith Iddon and Thomas McGowan.

07.S.22 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by Members relating to the items on the agenda.

07.S.23 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 11 May 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

07.S.24 REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Council adopted the revised Code of Conduct, with the ten general principles of public life as a preamble, on 15 May 2007. A training event had been held for Councillors on 17 May with 20 Councillors attending. The agenda item regarding declarations of interests on all committee agendas had been updated to reflect the revised Code.

The Council had written to all Parish Councils requesting them to confirm when the Code would be adopted and whether paragraph 12.2 had been adopted. The Council had offered to publish a notice in the press, on behalf of all Parishes, giving notice that a new Code had been adopted as required by Regulations.

Copies of the form for the registration of financial and other interests devised by the Council had been forwarded to all Parish Council clerks and an invitation to training sessions in July and September for clerks and Parish Councillors would be sent out in the next week.

Guidance from the Standards Board for England on the revised Code had been sent to all Borough and Parish Councillors.

RESOLVED – That

- 1. The update be noted,**
- 2. All Councillors who did not attend the training session on 17 May 2007 be requested to sign a confirmation slip confirmed that they had received and read the Guidance for Members on the Revised Code of Conduct.**

07.S.25 DEVELOPING A WORK PLAN FOR THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chair led a discussion on the creation of a work plan for the Standards Committee. The points would be formed into a draft work plan and presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

The topics included:

- Use of Council resources – protocols
- Guidance on confidential information
- Member/Officer protocol
- Developments from the Adjudication Panel (caselaw)
- Parish 'mentoring'
- Local filtering
- Partnerships
- Planning Code of Conduct

07.S.26 THE NUMBER OF ANY ALLEGATIONS REFERRED TO THE STANDARDS BOARD SINCE THE LAST MEETING

2.

07.S.27 THE NUMBER OF ANY ALLEGATIONS REFERRED BACK TO THE MONITORING OFFICER WHERE THERE IS NO FURTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN.

2.

07.S.28 BRIEF RESUME OF DETAILS REGARDING ANY ALLEGATIONS REFERRED BACK TO THE MONITORING OFFICER WHERE ACTION IS TO BE TAKEN EITHER BY THE COMMITTEE OR MATTERS BEING REFERRED TO THE ADJUDICATION PANEL.

An appeal on the recent Local Hearing would be heard by the Adjudication Panel.

07.S.29 ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES IS/ARE URGENT

The Chair highlighted the need for all Councillors to complete the 'financial and other interests form'.

The members were reminded that an event would be held on 9 July hosted by Lancashire County Council at the Woodlands Conference Centre. The event aimed to share experiences and formulate ideas for joint working and support on a range of standards issues. The revised Code and preparations for the local filtering of complaints from next year would also be considered.

The Committee discussed the work of the Standards Sub-Committee and its membership.

RESOLVED – That

- 1. A reminder letter be sent to those Councillors who had not returned a completed financial and other interest form,**
- 2. The Democratic Services officer contact the Councillors not present at the meeting to confirm their attendance at the event on 9 July,**
- 3. The membership of the Standards Sub-Committee be Mr Ellwood, Rev Cree and Councillor Alan Cain.**

Chair