

Standards Committee

Thursday, 16 September 2010

Present: Tony Ellwood (Independent Chair), Councillor Debra Platt (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Marie Gray, Laura Lennox, Gwynne Furlong (Independent Member), Bill Mason (Parish Council representative) and Tony Wilson (Parish Council Representative)

Officers in attendance: Chris Moister (Head of Governance / Monitoring Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

10.S.147 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Judith Boothman and Stella Walsh and Hugh Evans (Independent Member)

10.S.148 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 28 June 2010 be held as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

10.S.149 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were declared.

10.S.150 CHANGE IN APPOINTMENT CRITERIA - PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

The Committee received a report of the Monitoring Officer seeking a change in the appointment criteria for Parish Councillor Representatives.

Whilst there was a specific prohibition on the appointment of a Chorley Borough Council member to the position of a Parish Councillor Representative on the Standards Committee, this did not extend to other Councils.

The composition of the membership of the Standards Committee is set to ensure that there is a comprehensive mix of experience and views when considering Committee business and there was a concern that by appointing a Parish Council Representative member who was also a District, Borough or County Councillor their views would be prejudiced by their position.

The proposed alteration to the criteria would bring them in line with the existing exclusion for Chorley BC members.

RESOLVED – That the appointment criteria for Parish Council Representatives be amended to exclude from consideration any parish councillor who also sits as a District, Borough and County Councillor.

10.S.151 PROVISIONAL APPOINTMENT OF NEW PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

The Committee received a report of the Monitoring Officer advising the Committee of the provisional appointment of a new Parish Councillor Representative.

Following the election of Alan Platt as a Chorley Borough Councillor, the Standards Committee had a vacancy for a Parish Council Representative. This role is vital as

sub-committee's considering complaints concerning a parish councillor must include a parish councillor as a member.

A recruitment exercise had been carried out with all Parish Councillors in the Borough invited to apply for the post. Three applications had been received and all were interviewed on 11 August by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee with advice from the Monitoring Officer.

It was recommended that Parish Councillor Eileen McGhee be appointed to the vacant post.

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee recommend Full Council to approve the appointment of Eileen McGhee as a Parish Council Representative.

10.S.152 NEWS FROM STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND

The Monitoring Officer updated the Committee on the present arrangements with the Standards Board for England.

The Governments planned Decentralisation and Localism Bill included a proposal to 'abolish the Standards Board regime'. In light of this the Standards Board for England had decide to suspend the receiving of all monitoring information.

This was disappointing news although it was expected that this would take some time and that in the meantime the Standards Framework still existed and our Local Framework would continue to be used.

The Monitoring Officer also reported that there had been nine cases in the last quarter and although none had been deemed appropriate to bring to Committee it was noted that the punishments did seem to be harder than on previous occasions.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

10.S.153 PARISH COUNCIL MENTORING SCHEME

All the Members of the Standards Committee had now been allocated two Parish Councils to visit under the Parish Council Mentoring Scheme before the end of April 2011.

Each of the Members would keep Democratic Services informed of the dates that they visited so that a central record could be kept.

RESOLVED – That a list of the allocations be circulated to the Members of the Standards Committee.

10.S.154 STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Standards Sub-Committee meeting that was held on 8 September 2010 were circulated for Members information.

The Sub-Committee examines the Register of Members Interests under the Code of Conduct for both Borough and Town and Parish Councils within the Chorley area.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Standards Sub-Committee meeting held on 8 September 2010 be noted.

10.S.155 STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the updated Standards Work Programme for information.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be noted.

10.S.156 CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING

Following a number of Parish Council Elections the Chair requested that a training session be arranged in the near future, for all Parish Councillors on the Code of Conduct.

Chair