

Standards Committee

Thursday, 17 June 2010

Present: Tony Ellwood (Independent Chair), Councillor Debra Platt (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Judith Boothman, Marie Gray, Laura Lennox, Stella Walsh, Gwynne Furlong (Independent Member) and Tony Wilson (Parish Council Representative)

Officers in attendance: Donna Hall (Chief Executive Chorley Council), Chris Moister (Head of Governance / Monitoring Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

10.S.133 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular the new Committee members.

10.S.134 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Bill Mason (Parish Council representative) and Hugh Evans (Independent Member)

10.S.135 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 4 March 2010 be confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

10.S.136 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No interests were declared by Committee Members in respect of items on the agenda.

10.S.137 NEWS FROM STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND

The Monitoring Officer reported that a holding letter had been received from the new Government regarding potential changes to Standards for England.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

10.S.138 CASES UPDATE

The Committee received the report of the Monitoring Officer outlining recent cases that had been considered nationally by the First –tier Tribunal (Local Government Standards in England).

There was only one local case that had been decided by the First-tier Tribunal.

The quarterly return to Standards for England was also received for information.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. The quarterly return to Standards for England for January to March 2010 be noted.**

10.S.139 ANNUAL RETURN TO STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND

The Committee received for information the Annual Return to Standards for England that the Council had submitted. The Monitoring Officer explained that that this was the

first time that Standards for England had requested this type of information and it would be used in the future to establish best practice within Local Authorities.

RESOLVED – That the Annual Return for 2009/10 be noted.

10.S.140 TOWN AND PARISH MENTORING

The Chair outlined the background to the mentoring scheme, advising the it had now been in operation successfully for the previous three years. The main aim of the scheme was promoting awareness of the Code of Conduct and the Chorley Standards Committee.

The mentors would act as a contact point for queries and attend meetings of their allocated Town and Parish Councils at least once a year. Mentors would not give advice on specific cases or deliver detailed training as these should be referred to the Monitoring Officer. Previous Members of the Committee requested that they be allocated different Parish Council this year so that they could widen their experiences and the Chief Executive suggested disseminating the case studies information to give parish councillors a greater understanding of Standards.

The mentoring scheme was offered in addition to the training every year for Parish Councils.

RESOLVED – That the Democratic and Member Services Officer would:

- 1. Contact the Members of the Committee to allocate the 22 Parish Councils within Chorley for this Municipal year.**
- 2. Write to Committee members and Parish Council clerks to confirm the details.**
- 3. Distribute the Case Studies information to the Parish Clerks.**

10.S.141 WORK UNDERTAKEN TO PROMOTE THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Monitoring Officer explained that a training event had recently been held to promote the work of the Code.

The Annual Report of the Committee would be considered at the July Council meeting.

An article containing a link to case reports on the Adjudication Panels website would be published in a future edition of 'intheknow', the electronic information bulletin for Members. This link would also be emailed out to the clerks of the Parish Councils.

RESOLVED – That the work being undertaken to promote the Code of Conduct be noted.

10.S.142 REVISED STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND DETERMINATIONS GUIDANCE

The Committee received a guidance document designed to help Members and officers who are involved in the determination of complaints that a member may have breached the Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer urged the Committee to read the guidance and advised that he would be available to answer any questions that Members may have.

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee Determinations Guidance document be noted.

10.S.143 TRAINING ISSUES

The Monitoring Officer reported that a training session had been held on 9 June 2010 on the Code of Conduct for all Members of the Committee and new Members of the Council.

It was a requirement of the Code to provide annual training to all Members of the Council. The Committee discussed the format of the training and agreed to wait until August to ascertain if a new Code of Conduct would be issued before rolling the training session out to both Borough and Parish Councillors.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10.S.144 APPOINTMENT OF STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Chair advised the Committee that the purpose of the Sub-Committee was to review the financial and other interests registers for both Borough and Parish Councillors.

Most of the annual returns had been receipted and would soon be ready for inspection.

The meetings of the Sub-Committee had already been agreed as part of the calendar of meeting for the year and were to be held on 8 September 2010 and 24 February 2011.

RESOLVED

1. That the update be noted.
2. That the membership of the Standards Sub-Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year be Tony Ellwood (Independent Member), Debra Platt (Borough Councillor) and Tony Wilson (Parish Councillor)

10.S.145 STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received information on suggested topics for the Standards Work Programme and the Monitoring Officer explained that they would be allocated to each of the subsequent meetings.

RESOLVED – That the suggested topics be noted.

10.S.146 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Following the appointment of Councillor Alan Platt as a Borough Council in the recent elections on 6 May 2010, there was a need to appoint a third Town and Parish representative.

The Monitoring Officer advised that a recruitment process was now underway. The job advertisement and copies of application packs had been circulated to all Parish Councils and the deadline for applications was 23 July with the successful candidates being interviewed on 11 August.

RESOLVED – 1. That the update be noted.

2. That an email be sent to all Parish Council Clerks to remind them of the application deadlines.

Chair