
REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2009

Chairman:	* The Right Revd Peter Broadbent	
Councillors:	* Husain Akhtar	* Asad Omar
	* B E Gate	* Paul Osborn (1)
	* Joyce Nickolay	Mark Versallion
Independent Persons:	* Ms Sheila Darr	† Mr Mohammad Rizvi
	* Dr J Kirkland	

* Denotes Member present
 (1) Denotes category of Reserve Member
 † Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**112. **Appointment of Chairman:**

RESOLVED: That the Right Reverend Peter Broadbent be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2009/10.

113. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

Ordinary MemberReserve Member

Councillor Mrs Lurline Champagne

Councillor Paul Osborn

114. **Declarations of Interest:**

Councillors B E Gate and Paul Osborn both declared personal interests in agenda item 10, "Member Development – Future Operating Arrangements", by virtue of their membership of the Member Development Panel. They would both remain in the room and participate in the discussion and decision on this item.

RESOLVED: To note the declarations of interests made by Members as set out above.

115. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman:**

RESOLVED: That Mr M Rizvi be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2009/10.

116. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

117. **Review of Procedures for the Local Assessment of Complaints:**

Further to this having been raised as a matter arising from the minutes of the last meeting (Minute 111 refers), a Member queried when the Committee would be reviewing its procedures for the assessment of complaints. Having recently been the subject of a complaint, the Member expressed concern that they had not been notified of the outcome of the Assessment Sub-Committee meeting until they received the written decision notice some time after the meeting. Another Member stated that after serving on an Assessment Sub-Committee they had received a number of queries from Members as to the outcome.

The Committee agreed that it needed to revisit the procedures and, specifically, how and when Members were notified of complaints. It was noted, however, that a revised Code of Conduct for Members was awaited and it would be preferable to review the procedures after this had been published. It was therefore

RESOLVED: That, at its next meeting on 21 September 2009, the Committee either be notified of the timescale for the publication of the revised Code of Conduct, or review its procedures for the local assessment of complaints, if the timescale for the new Code were still unknown.

118. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 19.

119. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 16.

120. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 17.

121. **Protocol for Councillors - Website Facilities:**

At its meeting on 17 December 2007, the Committee had considered a report which suggested that Councillors be provided with the facility to write and edit their own pages on the Council website, and proposed a draft protocol for acceptable use of that facility. Members now received a report of the Director of Business Transformation and Customer Services which suggested a revised approach, namely that rather than provide pages for Councillors on the website, links to external resources be added to Members' webpages upon request.

There was some concern that linked websites could be used by Members to publish inappropriate material, and that this would require considerable monitoring. It was advised, however, that it was not proposed to monitor linked sites, and the publication of any inappropriate material could be dealt with through the procedures for complaints of breaches of the Code of Conduct. There would also be a disclaimer on the Council webpages stating that the Authority was not responsible for the content of external sites, and all links to external sites would be removed in the run-up to an election. It was noted that once the proposal had been reported to the Member Development Panel, it was proposed to re-draft the acceptable use protocol and re-submit it to the Standards Committee for consideration.

Members considered that the proposal would encourage improved Member engagement with the community, and this was welcomed.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted; and

(2) a report on the proposal for training for Members on the use of web resources be submitted to a future meeting of the Member Development Panel.

122. **Member Development - Future Operating Arrangements:**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services which proposed that the Member Development Panel be re-designated a Cabinet Advisory Panel in light of its increasing focus on individual Member Development, which sat within the Portfolio of the Leader of the Council. The report also suggested that one of the Independent Members of the Standards Committee be appointed as a Co-opted Member of the Panel in order to retain a link with the Committee, given its responsibility for training on the Member Code of Conduct and other relevant protocols. The Council's commitment to achieving the Member Development Charter was highlighted.

A Member expressed concern that Member development was not well supported by Members. She suggested that this would be better addressed either by bringing it within the remit of the Standards Committee itself, or by increasing the size of the Member Development Panel so that it involved more Members, resulting in a greater exchange of ideas. An increase in the size of the Panel was supported by some Members, but not by others, who felt that it would not improve support for Member development. It was also noted that the remits of the Member Development Charter and the Panel were both wider than the Standards Committee's own remit with regard to Member training. It was therefore logical for the Panel to be established as a Cabinet Advisory Panel in line with the Leader's Portfolio.

There was concern that the operating arrangements of the Member Development Panel should not become more restricted as a result of it becoming a Cabinet Advisory Panel, for example in terms of openness of discussion. Members also queried whether the new Panel would be established on a non-proportional basis as it was currently, as they would not wish the Panel to become politicised. It was agreed that the Committee's comments on these matters, and with regard to the size of the Panel, be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

With respect to the proposal to appoint one of the Independent Members of the Standards Committee as a co-optee to the Panel, this was not supported. It was agreed that a better way for the Committee to engage with the Panel would be for it to receive reports from the Panel as and when it considered issues relating to the Committee, or to receive the Panel's minutes on a regular basis.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Council's ambition to be awarded the Member Development Charter be welcomed and endorsed;

(2) Cabinet be requested to establish the Member Development Panel as a Cabinet Advisory Panel, reporting to the Leader of the Council (Councillor David Ashton) as part of his portfolio for Strategy, Partnership and Finance;

(3) the Terms of Reference and membership of the Panel be agreed by Cabinet as part of the future operating arrangements, and Cabinet be requested to consider the comments of the Committee in relation to the size, political composition and working arrangements of the Panel;

(4) the Committee receive reports or minutes from the Member Development Panel, in order to be kept informed on issues falling within the Committee's remit.

123. **Establishment of Sub-Committees for 2009/10:**

Further to the decision that the Member Development Panel be established as a Cabinet Advisory Panel rather than as a subsidiary body of this Committee (Resolution 122 above refers), Members considered the re-establishment of the Assessment, Review and Hearing Sub-Committees.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committees of the Standards Committee be established for the Municipal Year 2009/10 with the memberships detailed in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.22 pm).

(Signed) THE RIGHT REVD PETER BROADBENT
Chairman

APPENDIX 1STANDARDS PANELS**ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEES (3) – (Pool of Members)
(Non-Proportional)**

(To be selected from the following nominees)

	<u>Independent Persons</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>
	(1) Chairman	(1)	(1)
<u>I.</u> <u>Members</u>	Rev Peter Broadbent Sheila Darr John Kirkland Mohammad Rizvi	Husain Akhtar Mrs Lurline Champagnie Joyce Nickolay Mark Versallion	B E Gate Asad Omar
<u>II.</u> <u>Reserve</u> <u>Members</u>		1. Paul Osborn 2. Tom Weiss 3. Jeremy Zeid 4. Vina Mithani	1. Mitzi Green 2. Phillip O'Dell

Membership Rules

- (1) The membership of the Standards Committee - Assessment and Review Sub-Committees will be three persons (comprising one Independent Persons and one Elected Member from each of the main political parties, within the Standards Committee Membership);
- (2) the quorum for the Sub-Committees is 3
- (3) the Sub-Committees shall be chaired by the Independent Person;
- (4) Members attending a Panel be required to vote on a local determination and not be permitted to abstain.

**HEARING SUB-COMMITTEE (5) – POOL OF MEMBERS
(Non-Proportional)**

(To be selected from the following nominees)

<u>Independent Persons</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>
(3) Chairman + 2 Independent Members from the Pool	(1)	(1)

**I.
Members**

Rev Peter Broadbent
Sheila Darr
John Kirkland
Mohammad Rizvi

Husain Akhtar
Mrs Lurline Champagnie
Joyce Nickolay
Mark Versallion

B E Gate
Asad Omar

**II.
Reserve
Members**

1. Paul Osborn
2. Tom Weiss
3. Jeremy Zeid
4. Mrs Vina Mithani

1. Mitzi Green
2. Phillip O'Dell

Membership Rules

- (1) The membership of the Standards Committee Hearing Sub-Committee, to hear local determinations will be five persons (comprising three Independent Persons and one Elected Member from each of the main political parties, within the Standards Committee Membership);
- (2) the quorum for the Sub-Committee hearing a local determination is 3, including at least two of the Independent Persons;
- (3) the Sub-Committee hearing a local determination be chaired by one of the Independent Persons;
- (4) the Independent Person to fulfil the function in (3) be appointed by the Standards Committee;
- (5) Members attending the Sub-Committee be required to vote on a local determination and not be permitted to abstain.