
REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2009

Chairman: * The Right Revd Peter Broadbent

Councillors: * Husain Akhtar * Joyce Nickolay
 * Mrs Lurline Champagnie * Paul Osborn (1)
 * B E Gate
 * Mitzi Green (1)

Independent Persons: Ms Sheila Darr * Dr J Kirkland
 Mr M Rizvi

* Denotes Member present
 (1) Denotes category of Reserve Member

[Note: Councillor Mrs Kinnear also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 130 below].

PART I - RECOMMENDATION
RECOMMENDATION I - Appointment of Independent Members of the Standards Committee

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services which was admitted late to the agenda in order that the recruitment process for Independent Members to serve from May 2010 could commence as early as possible.

An officer explained that, further to the preparation of the report, discussions had taken place with each of the Leaders of the main political groups, for their nominations to the proposed Selection Panel. These had been obtained and reported accordingly.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

(1) four Independent Members be appointed to serve on the Standards Committee for four years from May 2010, and one Independent Member be appointed to act only (a) in the event that any of the Independent Members resigns or is unable to continue before the expiry of their term of office and (b) as and when appointed by Council;

(2) a Selection Panel comprising four Members of Council (two Conservative; one Labour; one Liberal Democrat) be established by the Standards Committee for the purposes of recruiting the Independent Members of the Standards Committee from May 2010, and that the proposed terms of reference of the Panel be agreed;

(3) the membership and Chairman of the Panel be appointed, subject to the approval of resolution (2) above by Council, as follows:

Councillor Paul Osborn (Chairman)
 Councillor Brian Gate
 Councillor Vina Mithani
 Councillor Paul Scott

PART II - MINUTES

124. **Moment's Silence:**
The Chairman requested that the Committee stand and observe a moment's silence in memory of Councillor Asad Omar's wife who had passed away since the last meeting.
125. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**
RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-
- | <u>Ordinary Member</u> | <u>Reserve Member</u> |
|--|--|
| Councillor Asad Omar
Councillor Mark Versallion | Councillor Mitzi Green
Councillor Paul Osborn |
126. **Declarations of Interest:**
RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:
- | <u>Agenda Item</u> | <u>Member</u> | <u>Nature of Interest</u> |
|--|------------------------|--|
| 11. Register of Members' Interest – Compliance | Councillor Mrs Kinneer | The Member, who was not a Member of the Committee, declared a personal interest in that she was named in the report. Accordingly Councillor Mrs Kinneer remained in the room during the discussion on this item. |
127. **Minutes:**
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
128. **Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations:**
RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rules 19, 16 and 17 respectively.
129. **Standards for England Intervention, Joint Standards Committees and Dispensations:**
The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services which highlighted changes made by the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Regulations 2009. An officer explained the key changes made by the regulations.
RESOLVED: That the report be noted.
130. **Review of the Local Standards Framework Arrangements:**
The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services which set out the current local standards framework and set out proposed options for consideration by the Committee. An officer explained that the report was prepared as a response to previous concerns raised by the Committee as to how and when Members were informed of a complaint against them. The officer explained that they had conducted research and studied guidance provided by Standards for England (SfE). As a result officers had highlighted two main options proposed in relation to how and when Members were informed about complaints and decisions. During the discussion, Members raised a number of issues and queries which were discussed.

The Chairman summarised the position of the Committee and explained that the Committee would advocate for respondents to be told about decisions only initially via a telephone call from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer to communicate the decision only. It was stressed that only the decision should be communicated. This would then be followed up with a letter detailing the decision taken. In addition Members would be informed of complaints after the meeting of an Assessment Sub Committee. In addition the process should be reviewed in two years

time, to allow for a period of implementation to be established in light of the forthcoming elections.

RESOLVED: That (1) Members be informed of complaints made against them after a meeting of the relevant Assessment Sub Committee;

(2) Members be informed of the decision of the Assessment Sub Committee initially via a telephone call from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer, followed up by a formal letter;

(3) the process be reviewed in two years' time.

131. **Ethical Governance Project:**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services which set out a summary of the project on Ethical Governance to be carried out by the Audit Commission. An officer identified the costs, the scope, objectives and the audit approach for the project.

A Member commented that one of the reasons for conducting this project was that a Use of Resources Assessment had identified the need for an Ethical Governance Framework review.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

132. **Appointment of Independent Members of the Standards Committee:**

(See Recommendation I).

133. **Register of Members' Interests - Compliance:**

An officer explained to the Committee that since the preparation of the report, all outstanding register of interest forms had been completed and returned.

A Member suggested that the importance of completing and updating the forms be communicated during the Member Induction Programme.

RESOLVED: That no further action be taken.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.31 pm).

(Signed) THE RIGHT REVD PETER BROADBENT
Chairman