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**REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE**


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**MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2009**


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Chairman:	* The Right Revd Peter Broadbent	
Councillors:	* Husain Akhtar	* Paul Osborn (1)
	* B E Gate	* M Rizvi
	* Joyce Nickolay	* Jeremy Zeid (3)
	* Asad Omar	
Independent Persons:	* Ms Sheila Darr	Dr J Kirkland

\* Denotes Member present  
(1) and (3) Denote category of Reserve Member

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**
**RECOMMENDATION I - Members' Access to Information - Guidance and Protocol**

The Committee considered a report which provided revised guidance and protocols in relation to Members' Access to Information. Members commented that generally the revised guidance was helpful and sufficiently clear to understand.

A Member commented that, in his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services, he had some involvement in the preparation of the document. He explained that a key aspect of the revised guidance was that if a request for exempt information was not granted by officers, a Member could refer the request to the Chairman of the Standards Committee. This was an important governance issue as it meant an independent person acted as an arbitrator, thus providing transparency.

The Committee further considered that the protocol should include reference for a request to be referred to the Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee, in circumstances where the Chairman was unavailable. This would ensure that there was a contingency plan if the Chairman was unavailable whilst maintaining the level of transparency sought.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:**

That (1) a further provision at paragraph 26 be inserted into the guidance and protocol to ensure that the Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee considers referred requests for information, in circumstances where the Chairman is unavailable;

(2) Council be requested to approve the revised Members' Access to Information – Guidance and Protocol for inclusion in the Constitution.