

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Agenda item 2**

**7 March 2008**

**Present:** Mr Jon Leamon (Chair), Mr John Cripps, David O'Connor  
Parish Councillor Stuart Fowler

**Apologies:** Mr Simon Lainé  
Councillors Tina Franklin, David Prince and Robin MacDonald

**Also in attendance:** Jane Griffiths, Assistant Chief Executive

**(4.00 – 6.10 pm)**

The chair welcomed Peter Lewis to the meeting who had taken over from Quentin Baker as the lead officer for the Standards Committee in his capacity as Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for the next 12 months.

**1. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2008 be approved and signed as a true record.**

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

Page 1, item 4– Mr Cripps apologised that he had not been able to attend the meeting of the West Midlands branch of Monitoring Officers on 7 March 2008.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**4. MEMBERS REPORTS ON ATTENDANCES AT COUNCIL, COMMITTEE AND PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS AND OTHER MEETINGS**

The Chair reminded members that it had been agreed that all independent members would attend a Parish council meeting before the end of April.

It was suggested that it would be good practice for members to inform the clerk of the Parish council of their attendance before a meeting.

Mr O'Connor reported to the committee that he had attended a meeting of the Charlton Kings Parish Council and their planning committee meeting.

The Democratic Services Manager agreed to arrange for members of the Standards Committee to receive an e-mail link to future council agendas. **\*RR\***

In response to a question the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer advised that there were Midlands and South West branches of ACSeS which from time to time considered standards issues which may be appropriate for attendance by members of

*To be approved at the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 11 July 2008*

the committee. He would endeavour to inform committee of relevant training/discussion forums to attend. **\*PL\***

## **5. UPDATE ON LATEST BULLETINS, CASES AND COMPLAINTS**

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer updated members on the Bulletin 36 from the Standards Board for England which had been circulated with the agenda. He highlighted that the regulations and guidance for local filter arrangements were still outstanding and the indications were that the new start date was now 1 May 2008.

The chair also referred members to bulletin 37 which he had received via e-mail which indicated that the guidance toolkit for local assessment would be available for 1 May 2008. The Democratic Services Manager agreed to investigate whether all members of the committee could receive the bulletin via e-mail. **\*RR\***

The Chair agreed to forward his copy of bulletin 37 to all members.

Regarding complaints, the Assistant Chief Executive advised that Rita Baker, the officer who had previously reported this committee, was taking early retirement and future updates would be given by Karen Watson.

## **6. THE DRAFT CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced her report which had been circulated with the agenda. In her introduction she highlighted the important role of the Standards Committee in reviewing the progress made in implementing the recommendations regarding ethical issues.

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer highlighted a number of factual amendments required in the document in sections 2.7, 2.9, 3.2, 3.3, 4.6, 4.7, 6.3 and 6.9 which were agreed by the committee. The Assistant Chief Executive agreed to update the document accordingly. She explained that the draft code was going to Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March and she would circulate a revised document to all members before that meeting.

**Resolved : that the draft code of corporate governance be noted and that the amendments requested at this meeting be incorporated in a revised version for Council on 17 March 2008.**

## **7. DRAFT PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER OFFICER RELATIONS**

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer referred the committee to the revised draft part 5C of the constitution containing the protocol for member/officer relations which had been circulated with the agenda. He explained that it incorporated the changes requested by this committee at their last meeting. He suggested that it should go out to formal consultation with members and officers before going to Staff and Support Services Committee and then on to Council in June. He asked the committee whether they wanted the protocol to come back to them after it had been to Staff and Support Services Committee. Members said this would not be necessary if their views still prevailed and they would leave it to the judgement of the Borough

*To be approved at the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 11 July 2008*

Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to decide whether it should be brought back to this committee.

**Resolved that:**

- i) the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer circulate the draft to members and officers for formal consultation**
- ii) the draft protocol then be approved by the Staff and Support Services committee before going to Council in June for approval and incorporation in the constitution..**

## **8. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The committee commended the draft annual report produced by Mr Lainé and requested no changes. Mr Leamon agreed to attend Council on the 17 March 2008 to introduce the report and answer any questions.

**Resolved: that the draft annual report be approved and reported to the next meeting of Council on 17 March 2008.**

## **9. REVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST WORK PLAN**

The workplan was updated following discussions and a revised version is attached to these minutes.

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer updated members on the progress he had made regarding possible joint arrangements with other standards committees. He said that the council was still pursuing a twin track approach and he had attended a meeting of the Gloucestershire Monitoring Officers earlier that day. All councils, apart from the Forest of Dean and Gloucester County Council, were keen to proceed with the joint committee approach and he would now take this forward. Constitutional changes would be required and these would need to be agreed by the Staff and Support Services Committee.

The Democratic Services Manager advised that the recruitment process for additional members had been successful and two potential new independent members had been identified. The committee agreed to appoint one new member at this stage but wanted to encourage the second potential member to maintain their interest in case a future vacancy should arise. She also advised that a recent meeting of C5 had appointed Mr Barrie Lewis as the additional parish council member for this committee with Mr Reg Beagley as his deputy. However the committee was advised that Mr Beagley had resigned his position as parish councillor and C5 would need to be approached again.

The Democratic Services Manager agreed to progress their formal appointment to the committee and advise C5 of the need to appoint a new deputy. **\*RR\***

**Resolved: to recommend to Council that Mr Duncan Chittenden be appointed to the committee as an independent member and Mr Barrie Lewis as an additional parish council representative with a deputy to be advised.**

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

*To be approved at the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 11 July 2008*

The date of the next ordinary meeting of the Committee will be on 11 July 2008.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

In response to a question from the committee regarding member induction, the Democratic Services Manager updated the committee on the induction plans following the elections. She advised that all members would be invited to an open day on Wednesday 7 May 2008. This would include a short presentation by the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer on the code of conduct and this would be followed by a more detailed session later in the month. She would encourage members of this committee to be involved in the induction session and will circulate more details in due course.

**MR JON LEAMON  
CHAIRMAN**