

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Special meeting 25th May

Present: Mrs P. Hudson-Bendersky (in the chair)
Mr S.Lainé (Vice-Chair), Mr J. Cripps
Parish Councillor S Fowler
Councillors Tina Franklin and David Prince.

Apologies: Councillor Robin MacDonald

Also in attendance:

(4.30 – 5.35 pm)

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2007 be approved and signed as a true record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Mr Lainé indicated that he could not recall having received a schedule of parish council meetings for 2007. It was requested that the information be re-sent to Mr Lainé as soon as possible. ***DSM***

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. REVISED MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

The Monitoring Officer introduced this report which had been circulated with the agenda. He explained that the Standards Committee was being asked to consider the draft codes, one for Cheltenham Borough Council and the other version for use by parishes within the borough, for which the Standards Committee has jurisdiction, and make recommendations as to their adoption by each relevant authority and any amendments considered appropriate. He indicated that authorities must include the mandatory options and may include the relevant optional provisions should they opt to do so. Where an authority fails to adopt the revised Code of Conduct, the mandatory provisions will apply automatically.

The Standards Committee considered Appendix A (CBC version) and Appendix B (parish council version) taking each paragraph in turn. During discussion, the Monitoring Officer provided further clarification in a number of areas and the following comments were made by the Committee:-

- Part 1 - Introduction and interpretation (4a). The 'authority' for each case needed to be more clearly defined i.e. Cheltenham Borough Council or the parish council hereafter referred to as the authority.

To be approved at the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 13 July 2007

- The word 'reasonable' was used throughout the document and where possible this should be further defined as in paragraph 4 so that members are clear of their responsibilities. The Committee requested that this point be raised at the full Council meeting on 28th June 2007 for an opinion.
- The alternative wording for CBC para 7 and para 10 was recommended for inclusion in the draft code.
- Subject to some slight amendments noted by the Monitoring Officer, the Committee recommended that the optional wording in respect of the parishes be included in the draft code, with the exception of paragraph 11 relating to overview and scrutiny committees which was not applicable.

The Monitoring Officer agreed to make the necessary amendments and re-circulate the two draft versions of the codes to members of the Standards Committee, prior to reporting the conclusions on the borough version to full Council on 28th June and writing to each of the parish councils enclosing a recommended version of the code.

RESOLVED that

- i) The Standards Committee approves the draft code for Cheltenham BC in the form attached to this report (as amended) and recommends to Council that it adopts this draft Code as the new Members' Code of Conduct for Cheltenham Borough Council to take effect from 1st October 2007**
- ii) The Monitoring Officer is instructed to report this decision and recommendation to full Council at the earliest opportunity.**
- iii) The Standards Committee approves the draft code for adoption by the 5 parishes within the borough of Cheltenham and instructs the Monitoring Officer to write to the five parishes enclosing a recommended version of the code. *MO***

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next ordinary meeting of the Committee will be on 13 July 2007.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **Recruitment of Independent Members**
The Chairman indicated that three applications had been received prior to the closing date of Friday 1st June. She informed the Committee that the interview panel will consist of herself and Councillor Franklin with officer support from the Monitoring Officer. Mr Lainé suggested that in order to avoid the situation of a split decision it would be useful to have three members on the panel. It was agreed that another independent member should be invited onto the panel and the details sent to Mr Lainé to check his availability. ***DSM***
- **Six monthly meeting with Chief Executive and the Leader**
The Chairman indicated that herself and the Vice Chairman, Mr Lainé would shortly be meeting with both the Chief Executive and the Leader to provide an update on the work of the Standards Committee and discuss future issues.

To be approved at the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 13 July 2007

MRS P. HUDSON-BENDERSKY
Chairman