

Standards Committee

Friday, 10th December, 2010
2.30 - 3.15 pm

Attendees	
Borough Councillors:	Les Godwin, Rowena Hay and Robin MacDonald
Parish Councillors:	Gloria Coleman, David Iliffe and Paul Ryder
Independent Members:	Duncan Chittenden, John Cripps, Simon Lainé (Chair) and David O'Connor
Also in attendance:	

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Jonathan Leamon

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Parish Councillor Paul Ryder declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 8 as he was well known to both parties.

Councillor MacDonald declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 as he had been on the parish council with one of the parties.

3. MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of 17 September 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

4. UPDATE ON THE LATEST BULLETINS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer referred to the recent communications from Standards for England which had been circulated with the agenda. There was still uncertainty about plans and timescales but it was likely that there would be no national code of members conduct in the future. She emphasised that until there was a change in the law, the current regulations remained in force and therefore standards committees must continue to uphold them.

5. EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer advised that Sarah Farooqi, a solicitor with One Legal, had been liaising with Human Resources to review this but there had been a delay which meant it was not ready to bring to this meeting.

In response to a question as to whether there would be any consultation with trade unions, the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer confirmed that this would take place. As the changes were mainly concerned with expanding the

section on interests that employees should declare and as the code was generally recognised to be of benefit to the council's employees, she did not anticipate any difficulty with these consultations.

6. REVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST WORK PLAN

The committee reviewed the Standards Committee work plan 2010/11 which had been circulated with the agenda.

The Code of Conduct for employees would be brought to the March meeting along with reports from the Monitoring Officer on corporate governance and advice on attendance at other meetings of Council and parish councils.

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer advised that it would not be a good time to organise a Forum given the current uncertainty and therefore this was removed from the workplan.

Resolved that the workplan as amended be noted.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT INFORMATION

Resolved that in accordance with Section 100A (4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraphs 7C, Part 1, Schedule 12A (as amended) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 7C

Information presented to a Standards Committee, or to a sub-committee of a Standards Committee, set up to consider any matter under regulations 13 or 16 to 20 of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, all referred under section 58 (1) (c) of the Local Government Act 2000.

8. CONSIDERATION OF A REPORT OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER

The Committee considered a report following an investigation into an alleged breach of conduct.

The Committee invited the Investigating Officer to summarise her report and questions were asked by members of the Committee upon matters arising from the report. The Committee agreed with the Investigating Officer's findings that in this particular case no breach of the code had occurred.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be Friday 11 March 2011 at 2:30 p.m. in the Pittville Room at the Municipal Offices.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

Chairman