

Standards Committee

Friday, 17th June, 2011
2.35 - 3.15 pm

Attendees	
Borough Councillors:	Les Godwin, Rowena Hay and Robin MacDonald
Parish Councillors:	Gloria Coleman and David Iliffe
Independent Members:	Simon Lainé (Chairman), Jon Leamon and David O'Connor
Also in attendance:	Sara Freckleton (Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer)

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from John Cripps, Paul Ryder and Duncan Chittenden.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman highlighted a spelling amendment required on page two of the minutes.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the amended minutes of the meeting held on the 11 March 2011 be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

4. MEMBERS REPORTS ON ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL, COMMITTEE AND PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS AND OTHER MEETINGS ARISING

The Chairman had presented the Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2010-2011 to Council on the 28 March with a brief introduction. There had been no comments or questions.

Jon Leamon interjected; Councillors including the Leader of the Council had commended the committee and its members for their work over the previous year.

The Chairman surmised that, pending clarity over the future conduct regime, members had withdrawn from attending meetings.

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

The Chairman notified the committee that there were no recent bulletins or communications from Standards for England. He had however, perused their website earlier in the day and could report that the second reading of the

Localism Bill was scheduled to start on the 20 June, though there was no mention of when this would be completed.

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer had received no further information; the suggestion remained that Standards for England would wind down by the end of the year. Members were assured that the Council accepted that the committee would be making recommendations with regards to future arrangements.

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer agreed with the suggestions of the Chairman, that the committee discuss their initial thoughts about future arrangements at the next meeting.

The Chairman highlighted an Impact Assessment paper published by CLG which he felt would be of interest to members of the committee. The paper (Localism Bill: The Abolition of the Standards Board Regime, clarification of the law on predetermination and the requirement to register and declare interests) put forward governance issues and outlined numerous figures. The link would be circulated to members outside of the meeting.

6. REVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST WORK PLAN

The Chairman introduced the work plan as circulated with the agenda. The work plan consisted of one item only, the Localism Bill; this had been discussed and would be considered further at the next meeting.

In response to a question from a member of the committee, the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer reiterated that current information was that the Localism Bill would complete its passage through Parliament by the end of the year. Depending upon the timing of publication of the new legislation, a special meeting of the Standards Committee may be required to formulate a response.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT INFORMATION

Upon a vote it was unanimously

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, or referred under section 58(1)(c) of the Local Government Act 2000.

8. EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt minutes had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman highlighted the need for adequate punctuation of the first paragraph on page two of the exempt minutes.

Councillor Godwin highlighted his concerns about the content of the exempt minutes. His issue was not with the accuracy of the minutes but rather the lack of content.

Jon Leamon proposed that the minutes include the name of the Councillor in question. This was seconded by David Iliffe.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the exempt minutes of the meeting held on the 11 March 2011 as amended, be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

9. INVESTIGATION OF AN ALLEGED BREACH OF A PARISH COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer introduced the report as circulated with the agenda. The report set out the time and associated cost of a recent investigation.

The report contained no recommendations and as such it was formerly noted by the committee.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no urgent items for discussion.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for the 14 October 2011.

Simon Lainè
Chairman