

Standards Committee

Monday 12 July , 2010 at 6.00 p.m.

at the Council House, Walsall

Present

Councillor A. Andrew
Mr. L. Bates
Mrs. H. Bashir
Ms. K. McLeod
Councillor G. Wilkes
Mr. A. Wood

346/10 Appointment of Chairman

Resolved

That Mr. R. Meller be appointed Chairman for the municipal year 2010/11

347/10 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Resolved

That Mr. L. Bates be appointed Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2010/11.

348/10 Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. R. Meller and Councillor P. Hughes.

349/10 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2010 copies having been sent to each member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

350/10 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

351/10 Timetable of standard items for Standards Committee 2010/11

The report of the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer was submitted:

(see annexed)

The Constitutional Services Manager (Mr. Garner) presented the report and answered questions raised by the Committee arising from the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That the timetable of agenda items to be submitted during the municipal year 2010/11 be agreed.

352/10 Timetable of meetings for local assessment of complaints 2010/11

The report of the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer was submitted:

(see annexed)

The Constitutional Services Manager (Mr. Garner) presented the report and answered questions raised by the Committee arising from the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That the timetable of meetings for local assessment of complaints 2010./11 be agreed.

353/10 Training for elected members 2010/11

The report of the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer was submitted:

(see annexed)

The Constitutional Services Manager (Mr. Garner) presented the report and answered questions raised by the Committee arising from the report.

The Committee considered additional training which could be offered to elected and co-opted members. Mr. Bates made the suggestion that case handling should be included in the forthcoming training programme.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That “case handling” be included in the forthcoming training programme for all elected and co-opted members.

354/10 Review of process for the appointment of independent members

The report of the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer was submitted:

(see annexed)

The Constitutional Services Manager (Mr. Garner) presented the report and answered questions raised by the Committee arising from the report.

Mr. Bates thought it was important the Committee encouraged new members and felt that members of the public did not fully understand the Committee or its role. Ms. McLeod agreed and made the point that independent members needed to stay independent. She felt that if members of the public were interested in the Committee, they should be allowed to “shadow” and apply to the positions as they became available.

Mr. Bates informed the Committee of suggestions raised at last year’s Annual Assembly of Standards Committee around this subject. He confirmed that the independent members of some authorities visited local bodies and community groups and he felt the Committee needed to be more pro-active in this area. He suggested that press releases detailing the work of the Committee could be published in the local press and Mr. Garner advised that he would speak to communications to see what can be done in this area and report back to the next meeting.

In response, Mr. Bates proposed leaving the appointment process as it was until further work had been carried out by officers in this area.

Resolved

That the appointment process remain unchanged until further work has been carried out by officers in this area and a report on publicity be submitted to the next meeting.

355/10 Members attendance at Committee 2009/10

The report of the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer was submitted:

(see annexed)

The Constitutional Services Manager (Mr. Garner) presented the report and answered questions raised by the Committee arising from the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer forward a copy of the report to group leaders so they are aware of member attendance at Council and Committees.

356/10 Letter from Dr. R. Chilton, Chair, Standards for England

The report of the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer was submitted:

(see annexed)

The Constitutional Services Manager (Mr. Garner) presented the report and answered questions raised by the Committee arising from the report.

Resolved

That the content of the report and letter be noted.

357/10 Standards Committee – case handling and learning

The report of the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer was submitted:

(see annexed)

The Constitutional Services Manager (Mr. Garner) presented the report and answered questions raised by the Committee arising from the report.

Mr. Bates referred to the discussion at item 7 – Training for elected members and said that he would like “case handling” to be included as a training session for all elected and co-opted members of the authority.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That case handling be included as a training session for all elected and co-opted members of the authority.

The meeting terminated at 6.45 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: