

## **Standards Committee**

**Thursday 12 October, 2006 at 6.00 p.m.**

**at the Council House, Walsall**

### **Present**

Councillor A.G. Bentley  
Mr. R. Meller  
Councillor J.G. O'Hare  
Mr. R. Taylor  
Councillor A. Underhill

### 199/06 **Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer, advised members that a Chair and Vice-Chair needed to be appointed to the Standards Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

#### **(a) Chair**

Mr. Taylor advised that he did not wish to be considered for the position of Chair as he was moving away from the area and would not be seeking re-appointment to the Committee.

It was **moved** by Councillor Underhill, seconded by Mr. Taylor and:

#### **Resolved**

That Mr. R. Meller be appointed Chair of the Standards Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

#### **Mr. R. Meller in the Chair**

#### **(b) Vice-Chair**

Mr. Meller advised the Committee that although he was not present at the meeting Mr. Bates was happy to stand for appointment as Vice-Chair.

It was **moved** by Mr. Meller, seconded by Councillor Underhill and:

#### **Resolved**

That Mr. L. Bates be appointed Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

200/06 **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Ms. McLeod, Mrs. Parsons, Mr. Bates and Dr. Biscoomb.

201/06 **Minutes**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2006, a copy having been circulated previously to each member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the insertion of the termination time of 7.17 p.m.

202/06 **Hearing panel of Standards Committee**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the hearing panel held on 24 July 2006, a copy having been circulated previously to each member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

203/06 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

204/06 **Code of Conduct hearing**

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

(see annexed)

Mr. Gill, Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services outlined the report which dealt with an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct confirming that the decision of the hearing panel had been reported back to the Standards Board as well as being published in the local press (11 August 2006). He further advised that one of the sanctions imposed by the panel was for the Councillor to undertake training on a one-to-one basis which had been completed on 7 August 2006.

Councillor Underhill raised concern relating to issues which were discussed in confidence with members and felt that permission was needed from the third party if a member was to speak to an officer regarding the matter.

Mr. Gill agreed with Councillor Underhill, stating that if information was released in confidence, it must only be shared once consent had been obtained from the relevant parties. He advised that he had difficulty in advising members and officers and in such circumstances, was only able to advise at the end of the conversation, if he was able to maintain their confidence or not.

Councillor Underhill felt that members, through relevant training needed to be made aware of how the Code of Conduct affected their role.

### **Resolved**

That the contents of the report be noted.

## **205/06 Declarations of interest and dispensation for members**

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

(see annexed)

The Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer outlined the report, advising that it had been written in two parts. The first related to declarations of interest which were defined as either personal or personal prejudicial. He confirmed that the Code of Conduct required all members to disclose their interests with a note of such declarations being recorded in the minutes. He advised that the second part of the report referred to dispensations which related to members being able to participate in meetings even though they had previously declared an interest in the item which was to be discussed. He confirmed that the Committee would decide if a member's request would be accommodated and issue a four year exemption which would be recorded in the register of members' interests.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer be requested to write to all members reminding them of the disclosure and dispensation provisions.

206/06 **Case law update**

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

(see annexed)

The Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring officer outlined the report advising that he had selected four examples of case law which he proposed to share with members on a regular basis.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer circulate the report with the following additions – that it is circulated on a regular basis and members are informed of the Standards Board website address to allow them to view cases in greater detail.

**Termination of meeting**

The meeting terminated at 6.45 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: