

Standards Committee

Monday 24 January 2011 at 6.00 p.m.

at the Council House, Walsall

Present

Mr. R. Meller (Chairman)
Mrs. H. Bashir
Councillor P. Hughes
Councillor D. Pitt
Mr. A. Wood

368/11 Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance was submitted on behalf of Ms. K. McLeod and Mr. M. Singh .

369/11 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2010 copies having been sent to each member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

370/11 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

371/10 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to be considered in private session.

372/11 Letter from Mr. L. Bates

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

(see annexed)

The Chair (Mr. Meller) spoke on this item and gave a brief overview of Mr. Bates work on the Committee on which he had served for almost nine years. Mr. Meller spoke of Mr. Bates commitment to improving ethical standards in the authority and wished him well for the future. Members proposed that a letter be sent to Mr. Bates thanking him for this service and work with the Standards Committee during this time.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That the Committee record its thanks to Mr. Bates for this service to the Standards Committee.
- (3) That a letter be sent to Mr. Bates thanking him for his services and work with the Standards Committee.

373/11 **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

Resolved

That Ms K. McLeod be appointed Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year 2010/12.

374/11 **Appointment of independent 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 (Mr. B. Gill) 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 Standards Committee support the re-election of Ms. K. McLeod and Mr. A. Wood as independent members.
- (3) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer submit a report to Annual Council recommending the re-appointment of Ms. K. McLeod and Mr. A. Wood as independent members of the Standards Committee.

375/11 **Letter from Dr. Robert Chiltern, Chair of Standards for England**

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 (Mr. B. Gill) 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.

376/11 **Standards Committee – Localism Bill**

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 (Mr. B. Gill) presented the report and answered questions raised by the Committee arising from the report.

Mr. Gill confirmed to the Committee that the Localism Bill had been published before Christmas and after his initial consideration of its content, advised the Committee on changes to the area of predetermination (Chapter 4) and ethical governance (Chapter 5).

Mr. Gill advised that the main provisions of the current regulations such as maintaining a register of financial and other interests were included in the Bill and the Committee noted that a new criminal offence had been highlighted, which if found guilty could see a member fined £5,000 and disqualified for 5 years.

Mr. Gill reported that he was planning a briefing session for members which was to address the main considerations of the Bill. Independent members confirmed they would be interested in attending, when this had been arranged.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft legislation affecting predetermination and the ethical governance framework be noted.
- (2) That further reports be received once the Bill is closer to receiving Royal Assent.

- (3) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer invite independent members of Standards Committee to the briefing sessions on the Localism Bill:

377/11 Council publicity – run-up to elections

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 (Mr. B. Gill) 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 (independent members) to bring the report to the attention of their members.
- (3) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services and Monitoring Officer write to all Executive Directors informing them of the provisions of the code.

378/11 Member attendance at Committee 2010/11

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 (Mr. B. Gill) presented the report and following discussion it was agreed that as the information contained within the report was available publicly this no longer needed to be submitted for consideration.

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 each of the group leaders so they are aware of member attendance at Council and Committee meetings.

- (3) That as the information contained within the report was available publicly, this no longer needed to be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

The meeting terminated at 7.04 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: