

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2010 AT COMMITTEE ROOM III, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Wiltshire Council Members

Cllr Nigel Carter, Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Julian Johnson and
Cllr Ian McLennan

Town/Parish Council Co-opted Members

Mr William Bailey, Mr Craig McCallum, Mr Paul Neale, Mr Robert Oglesby JP,
Mr John Scragg, Miss Pam Turner, Mr Keith Wallace and
His Hon David MacLaren Webster QC

Independent co-opted Members

Mrs Jane Bayley, Mr Michael Cronin, Mr Philip Gill MBE JP, Mrs Isabel McCord (Chairman),
Mr Ian McGill CBE, Mr Stuart Middleton and Mr Gerry Robson OBE (Vice-Chair)

Also Present:

Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Francis Morland

33. Presentation by Councillor Laura Mayes - Organisational Culture

The Chief Executive, Andrew Kerr and Councillor Laura Mayes, Portfolio Holder for Organisational Cultural gave a presentation entitled 'Shaping the Future – Being the Best' which outlined the Councils' vision and goals to be the best. The presentation also included details of how the Standards Committee could help the Shaping the Future Programme by reinforcing and promoting the agreed Wiltshire Council values.

34. Election of Chairman

On being proposed and seconded and there being no other nominations, it was

Resolved:

That Mrs Isabel McCord be appointed Chairman of the Standards Committee for 2010/11.

35. **Election of Vice Chairman**

On being proposed and seconded and there being no other nominations, it was

Resolved:

That Mr Gerry Robson OBE be appointed Vice Chairman of the Standards Committee for 2010/11.

36. **Apologies and membership of the committee**

There were no apologies for absence. The Chairman informed members that following Annual Council the elected membership of the committee remained the same.

37. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38. **Chairman's announcements**

Leaflet – Introducing your Standards Committee

The Chairman said that this was now complete and ready for issue. Members of the committee had each been given a copy and it would be distributed to all Members of the Council, Hubs, Town and Parish Councils, Libraries and Citizens Advice Bureaux. A letter would also be sent to Town and Parish Councils.

Update on review of the Constitution

The first meeting had been held on 15 March and was attended by the Chairman and Mr Stuart Middleton and Mr Paul Neale as well as 8 Wiltshire councillors.

The focus group discussed the scope of the review and how to handle the outcome of the separate reviews taking place for Area Boards, Development Control and Overview and Scrutiny in terms of the Constitution. It also agreed

the questionnaire that has been distributed to all Members of the Council so that their views on the Constitution can be taken into account.

It was hoped that the next meeting would be held by the end of June.

Code of Conduct Training

The first session had been held last month and there had been positive feedback. Some useful comments had been received and it was hoped that future training would include specific topics such as dual-hatted members.

The date of any future sessions would be circulated to committee members once they had been arranged.

39. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Peter Fuller declared a personal interest in agenda item 16 as he was mentioned in the report.

40. **Public participation**

There were no members of the public present

41. **Reappointment of Sub-Committees**

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which sought approval for the re-appointment of previously established sub-committees of the committee.

Resolved:

To re-appoint the following sub-committees of the Standards Committee on the same basis as previously agreed:

- (i) Assessment Sub-Committee**
- (ii) Review Sub-Committee**
- (iii) Hearing Sub-Committee**
- (iv) Consideration Sub-Committee**
- (v) Dispensation Sub-Committee**

42. **Outcome of Standards Hearing Sub-Committee**

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which reported the outcome of a recent Hearing Sub-committee. The report set out the basis for the decision and how that decision was reached.

The Chairman thanked the Investigating Officer and the sub-committee for their work.

Resolved:

To note the report

43. **Task and Finish Group - Training Needs Analysis**

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, Mr Gerry Robson OBE, gave a verbal update outlining the views that the Group had arrived at regarding training needs for both Wiltshire Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors, this included a suggestion on working in partnership with Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC).

The Standards Committee was asked to consider several recommendations from the Task and Finish Group and it was

Resolved:

1. That Councillor Carter asks the Councillor Development Group to consider inviting all Town and Parish Councillors (and Clerks) to attend the development sessions it organises as and when appropriate. The Councillor Development Group would have to consider the best ways to advertise these sessions to all Town and Parish Councils and relevant financial arrangements. Also to ask the Councillor Development Group consider as a priority inviting all Town and Parish Councillors (and Clerks) to attend development sessions on Chairmanship skills; Conflict Management; Mediation and Equalities and Diversities. Again the Councillor Development Group would have to consider the best ways to advertise these sessions to all Town and Parish Councils and relevant financial arrangements.

2. That a report be brought to the next meeting of the committee detailing the membership of Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC), what, if any, training evaluation has been carried out by WALC for Town and Parish Councils and if there is already any partnership working between Wiltshire Council and WALC.

44. **Task and Finish Group - Presentations to Area Boards**

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, Mr Gerry Robson OBE, outlined the outcomes of the first meeting of the Group. He asked the committee to consider whether the presentation should be simply on the role of the Standards Committee or whether it could also encompass some information to the public on dispensations and interests.

It was further agreed that the Monitoring Officer would consider the scope of the presentation and attend the next meeting of the Task and Finish Group and that the presentation would be refined and sent out to all committee members prior to being sent to Area Board Managers for their comments.

45. **Status Report on Complaints made under the Code of Conduct**

The Head of Governance presented the report which included the 'traffic lights' report as requested by the committee at a previous meeting.

The reasons for the items marked in amber and red were explained.

Resolved:

To note the report

46. **Standards Committee Draft Annual Report 2009/10**

The Chairman presented the revised draft report and explained that there were a few formatting errors to resolve following which it would be presented to Council in July.

Resolved:

To approve the draft annual report for presentation to Council in July.

47. **Standards Committee Plan 2010-2014**

The Chairman presented the Standards Committee Plan which had been adapted to identify the committees' top priorities. The plan would be formally reviewed by the committee twice a year, in September and March but would also be kept under review.

It was requested that a member of the committee with IT expertise be nominated to lead on ensuring the Standards content on the Wiltshire Council website is easily accessible. Mr McCallum said he was willing to do this.

Resolved:

- **To note the plan and its performance evaluation;**
- **To agree the top priorities for action in 2010;**
- **To nominate Mr Craig McCallum to be the Committee's lead on ensuring the Standards content on the Wiltshire Council website is easily accessible**

48. **Dispensations - Dual Hatted Members of Area Boards**

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which advised members on dual-hatted members of area boards in relation to their consideration of grant applications by parish, town and city councils and on the grant of dispensations to such members since the Committee adopted its procedure in July 2009.

An updated appendix 2 was tabled which clarified the reasons why the members were dual-hatted.

It was suggested that members be asked to re-visit their registers of interest to ensure that they had correctly recorded their membership of town and parish councils.

The Chairman requested that a report on dispensations granted be presented to the committee annually.

Resolved

- **To note the report.**
- **To agree that the Standards Committee should review the grant of dispensations on an annual basis.**
- **That a reminder be sent to all members to remind them to update their registers of interest if necessary.**

49. **Forward Plan**

The Committee received the Committee's Work Plan for 2010/11.

50. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items

(Duration of meeting: 2.00pm - 4.45 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Pam Denton, of Democratic Services,
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