

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Held on:	THURSDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2005
Held in:	OCTAGON SUITE, BRADLEY ROAD TROWBRIDGE
Present:	
District Council Representatives:	Cllrs Ernie Clark, Marion Clegg, Sophie Farkas
External Representatives:	Tony Frost (Chairman)
Town/Parish Representatives:	Mary Stacey and Horace Prickett
Also Present	Cllrs Sarah Content and Tony Phillips OBE
Officers:	Chief Executive, Legal & Democratic Services Manager and Member Support Officer (MS)

147. APOLOGIES AND CHANGES OF MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Cllr Eli Manasseh and Keith West.

There were no changes to the membership of the Committee to report as yet, however nominations for the post of independent member to replace Margaret Ellwood had been received and would be processed.

148. MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting on 1 June were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Committee noted that they were still awaiting a copy of the presentation of the 'Review of the Constitution' delivered by the Legal and Democratic Services Manager at the Standards Committee meeting on 1 June.

149. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

150. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman notified the Committee that he had received a letter from Margaret Ellwood resigning as an external representative of the Standards Committee. The Chairman thanked Margaret Ellwood for her contributions and help, which was echoed by the Committee and asked that the Legal and Democratic Services Manager send a letter of thanks to Margaret. The appropriate procedure would be actioned to find a replacement for the Committee.

A number of reports on the agenda were titled 'to follow'. Those reports were issued on the day prior to the meeting. The Chairman informed the Committee that he did not propose to consider those items as members had not had sufficient time to read and digest the material. Those items would be deferred until the next meeting.

The next meeting would commence at 6.30pm in the 8trium to deal with ordinary Standards Committee business and then reconvene in the Council Chamber at 7.15pm to deal with the item on the review of the Constitution to which all Members of the Council would be invited.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Legal and Democratic Services Manager write a letter of thanks to Margaret Ellwood**
- (ii) The following items be deferred until the next meeting of the Standards Committee or until an appropriate space in the workplan allows:**
 - **Guidelines for Enquiries**
 - **Further Mock Hearing**
 - **Review of Member Attendance**
 - **Work Programme**

151. STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND – COMPLAINTS UPDATE

The Legal and Democratic Services Manager informed the Committee no further complaints had been received, however the two outstanding complaints had still not been resolved.

Members would only know if a complaint had been resolved when the Standards Board for England publicised their report. The Standards Board for England were

aware of the Standards Committee frustrations and that it was very distracting for the members concerned.

152. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

This part of the meeting was discussed in the Council Chamber.

The Chief Executive explained that members would be receiving a draft revised Constitution, a consultation paper highlighting the issues and options by Peter Keith Lucas, a letter from the Chief Executive and a report asking members for comments on the draft revised Constitution.

Members had until 14 September 2005 to express preferences, make recommendations, ask for more information or ask for drafted options. The issues and options included those presented to members by Peter Keith Lucas on 11 August 2005. In addition to the original timetable members also had a second opportunity to offer comments, the deadline being 10 October 2005.

Any comments by members on the constitution should be directed to Member Support. It was hoped that any major issues would be identified during the first round of consultation so that by the 10 October there would only be minor issues left to resolve.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the comments of the Constitutional Review Group had already been submitted to Peter Keith Lucas.

Members expressed concern over the tight time scale involved particularly as the deadline for the second round of consultation was 10 October and the Standards Committee meeting was 2 days later. Therefore there was not adequate enough time to prepare and read the suggestions. It was then decided to hold the next Standards Committee meeting a week later on 20 October.

It is important that the new Constitution eliminates the problems of the current Constitution. One of the roles of the Standards Committee, within the new Constitution, will be to comment annually, before the Annual Council meeting, on any problems that may have arisen with the Constitution.

There will also be a meeting of the Group Leaders, including the Chair of the Standards Committee, before 10 October 2005 to discuss and collate the common consensus of member's views.

RESOLVED:

That a copy of Peter Keith Lucas next presentation be disseminated to all members

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Standards Committee was due to be held on Wednesday 12 October 2005 at 7pm in the 8trium at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge. However the meeting has now been rearranged to **Thursday 20 October 2005 at 7.00pm in The Council Chamber**, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

Note: it was subsequently agreed to postpone the meeting until 25 October, 2005.

(7.02pm – 8.07pm)

These minutes were prepared by Melanie Stimpson; Member Support Officer who can contacted on 01225 770322 or email mstimpson@westwiltshire.gov.uk.

Chairman:

Date: