

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Held on: **WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL 2006**

Held in: **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRADLEY ROAD
TROWBRIDGE**

Present:

District Council Representatives: Cllrs Marion Clegg, Sophie Farkas and Eli Manasseh

External Representatives: Tony Frost (Chairman), Dr Kurt Paulus and Keith West

Town/Parish Representatives: Horace Prickett and Mary Stacey

Also Present: Cllrs John Clegg and Bill Viles

Officers: Head of Legal & Democratic Services (NM) and Member Support Officer (MS)

20. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Ernie Clark.

21. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 15 March 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

23. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that the Local Determination Hearing had been scheduled for 18 May at 0930 in the Council Chamber, following the adjournment of the Hearing on 16 March.

24. STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND BULLETIN – BRIDGING THE GAP

OPEN FORUM: MR. F. MORLAND

Members were asked to consider the first bulletin that had been jointly produced by the SBE for Monitoring Officers and the Chairman of the Standards Committee.

It was noted that although some members are automatically sent a copy of the bulletin and it could be accessed via the SBE website it was felt that the bulletin should be given maximum publicity to all District, Town and Parish councillors.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards Board for England April Bulletin – Bridging the Gap be circulated to all District Councillors and to the Clerks to Parish and Town Councils.

25. METHODOLOGY FOR GRANTING DISPENSATIONS

OPEN FORUM: MR. F. MORLAND

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented a report on the law relating to dispensations.

The Chairman explained that the report was brought before the committee as a preliminary report for Officers to gather information regarding the granting of dispensations from a councillor perspective. A further report would be prepared for the next meeting which would include practical points raised by members.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that when a dispensation was granted it did not negate the obligation on a member to declare an interest, the reasons of the interest and the need to state that a dispensation had been granted.

The committee felt that there should be objective, clear reasons for granting dispensations.

RESOLVED:

That a further report on ‘The Methodology for Granting Dispensation’, be brought before the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

26 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its future work programme and agreed the work plan presented reflected an accurate record of that agreed at the last meeting of the Standards Committee.

The Committee agreed to consider the Code of Conduct at its next meeting. This would include going through the Code of Conduct so that it was properly understood. A request was made for the committee to be given an account of any past training that had been delivered to members and that issued on joining the Council. Those who had attended the SBE training sessions gave positive feedback.

The Committee asked for a short report on the Local Determination Hearing to include the procedure, what was discussed and how the decision was made.

There was some dissatisfaction amongst the Committee over the length of the agenda and under the current arrangements it was felt that the Committee did not offer a valued service. Therefore the Committee would prefer to have more on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the following priority order for the workplan: -

Matter of Decision	Date of Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of West Wiltshire District Council complaint procedure, the number of complaints received and the way in which these complaints were handled• Code of Conduct - Further widespread training and information on what is/is not a breach of the code of conduct• The methodology for granting dispensation – part 2• Procedural Review of Local Determination Hearing	7 June 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Report by the Standards Board for England – a look at the variety of complaints received and the way investigations into complaints was conducted• Consider how the Standards Committee shall monitor performance of the Constitution	19 July 2006

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and assess the role of Standards Committee member and how the Standards Committee is performing against these roles 	19 October 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report of the work of the Standards Committee 	1 February 2007

27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Standards Committee has been arranged for **Wednesday 7 June 2006 at 7.00pm** in **The Council Chamber**, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

(7.01pm – 7.40 pm)

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