

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Held on: **THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER 2006**

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

Present:

District Council Representatives: Cllrs Ernie Clark, Marion Clegg and Sophie Farkas

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

Town/Parish Representatives: Cllr Peter Leach

Also Present Cllrs John Clegg and Bill Viles

Officers: Head of Legal and Democratic Services (NM), Principal Lawyer (A A-P) and Member Support Officer (MS)

49 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Eli Manasseh and Horace Prickett.

50. MINUTES

The minutes of the last Standards Committee meeting held on 19 July were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

52. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- Welcomed Cllr Peter Leach who had been appointed as the Town Council Representative on the Standards Committee.
- Following the last meeting of the Standards Committee it was resolved that the Solicitor in collaboration with the Chairman of the Standards Committee write to the Standards Board for England in a plea for some relief of costs being incurred from Local Determination Hearings. The Chairman drew the Committees attention to the letter the Standards Board for England had written in response to the request. The implications would be discussed at a future meeting.
- An additional meeting of the Standards Committee would be held on 12 December 2006 to enable the Committee to review the constitution

53. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chairman asked the Standards Committee to discuss and consider the contents of its Annual Report. A draft of this would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee and approval of the report would be at the February meeting.

A summary of the Committees discussion and the incorporations into the Annual Report was as follows: -

- The last Annual Report was informative, however needed more work.
- Local Determination Hearing - How it was handled and how the Committee would manage future Hearings.
- What the Standards Committee had accomplished as well as what it had not, what it would have liked to have achieved and what it would like to do in the future, if resources are available.
- The role of the Standards Committee in reviewing the constitution.
- A profile of each Standards Committee Members.
- The composition of the Committee and reason for composition.

After approval the Annual Report would be distributed to all Town and Parish Councils and the County Council. It would also be sent to Council for noting and available on the website. The Chairman would write an article for West Wilts Matters to inform the public that copies would be available from the Council.

54. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee expressed concern that there was need to review the constitution, especially considering the cost to produce, so soon after adoption.

Cllr Clark felt that the constitution needed to be clear and concise and not open to interpretation.

Cllr J Clegg commented that regularly, planning applications were called into the Planning Committee without valid reasons, or without representations at the meeting of the person/Council who had called the application to Committee. He felt that this was an area, which needed addressing in the constitution.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Standards Committee would be meeting with the Solicitor to discuss the areas of the constitution which needed to be reviewed prior to the meetings of the Standards Committee on 12 December and 1 February 2007. It was

RESOLVED:

That following the briefing the Solicitor circulate the points discussed in order for the Committee to have ample time to digest the recommended changes.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the following priority order for the workplan: -

Matter of Decision	Date of Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Report of the work of the Standards Committee – Draft• Including Review and assess the role of Standards Committee member and how the Standards Committee is performing against these roles• Review of the Constitution of the Council	12 December 2006 (Additional Meeting)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of the Constitution of the Council• Annual Report of the work of the Standards Committee – Approval	1 February 2007

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the public consultation on the revised Code of Conduct 	PENDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications following the letter of response from the Standards Board for England. 	PENDING

55. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Standards Committee had been arranged for **Thursday 1 February 2007 at 7.00pm in The Council Chamber**, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

However an additional meeting of the Standards Committee had been arranged for **Tuesday 12 December 2006 at 7.00pm in The Council Chamber**, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

(6.30pm – 6.55pm)

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

This meeting was followed by a training session for all Members on the Code of Conduct