

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a MEETING of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held at COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE on THURSDAY 10 JUNE 2004.

PRESENT:

Mr A Gooch, Mr P McGuigan, Ms C O'Sullivan and Mr R Tickell

23. **Appointment of Chairman**

Resolved: To appoint Mr R Tickell as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

24. **Appointment of Vice Chairman**

Resolved: To appoint Mr P McGuigan as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

25. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Coleman and Mrs P Rugg.

26. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved: To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2004.

27. **Chairman's Announcements**

Welcome

The Committee warmly welcomed Catherine O'Sullivan, the newly appointed independent member, to her first meeting. Members also thanked George Thompson, who had recently retired from the Committee, for his significant contribution, particularly on financial issues, and hard work during his time as an independent member. The Committee wished George well for the future.

Complaints Procedure

The Chairman informed members that discussions were currently taking place regarding the final stage of the complaints procedure and that a report would be brought to the next meeting of this Committee in July.

Final Accounts

The Chairman informed members that they would no longer be required to approve the Council's statement of accounts. A Final Accounts Committee consisting of elected members had been set up for this purpose. Members welcomed this development and confirmed that they would still like to receive the final accounts for information only.

28. Corporate Complaints Procedure – Status Report

The Committee received a report by the Monitoring Officer. The report updated members on the progress made since the introduction of the complaints procedure on 1 April 2002.

Members noted that the County Council had received a favourable report from the Audit Commission on its complaints procedure.

There had been a significant increase in the number of complaints now being recorded and tracked and targets were being outlined for complaints handling by contractors working for the Council. The corporate complaints officer had conducted training and awareness sessions on recognising and recording complaints. There were now designated complaints officers in each of the Departments who acted as a central contact point. The complaints officers also held regular complaints forum meetings to share information and ideas.

Members felt that it would be useful for either the Chairman or the whole Committee to meet with the departmental complaints officers to establish a greater understanding of the link between them.

The Committee also suggested that it would be useful to receive a breakdown of the complaints so that it was clear whether these were resolved at stage 1, 2 or 3. This information should also be included in future reports on the complaints procedure.

Resolved: To note the report.

29. Frequency of Meetings

Members discussed the frequency of future meetings and decided that the number of meetings could be reduced to six per year.

Resolved:

- (1) *To hold meetings on the following dates commencing at 3pm:*

Thursday 8 July 2004

Thursday 7 October 2004

Thursday 2 December 2004

- (2) *To programme six meetings in the County Council diary for 2005.*

(Duration of meeting: 3.00pm – 3.40pm)

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