

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Held on: WEDNESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2007

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

Present:

District Council
Representatives: Cllrs Clark, Ezra and Martindale

External
Representatives: Tony Frost, Bruce Epsley & Gerry Robson

Town/Parish
Representatives: Cllrs Kinder and Wyeth

Also present: Cllrs Chivers and Hawker

Officers: Monitoring Officer (TD), Head of Legal Services (NM) and
Member Support Officer (AM)) and Member Support
Team Leader (PD)

67. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr March.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

69. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

- The Chairman introduced Andrew Mitchell who has taken on the role of Member Support Officer.
- Members were reminded of the seminar to be held with Wiltshire County Council on 18 January 2008. Members interested in attending should confirm this with Member Support.
- Members were reminded that the next Independent Members Forum will be held on Friday 29 February 2008 at South Oxfordshire District Council. Members interested in attending should confirm this with Member Support or the Chair.
- The DVD on the changes to the Code of Conduct from the Standards Board called "The Code Uncovered" had been distributed to all members.

- The Chairman drew Members attention to the page 7 of the Standards Board Bulletin 36, in particular the paragraphs entitled “Independent adjudicator abolished – new roles for standards committee”.
- The Chairman advised Members that he would be leaving the meeting at 8.15pm and invited Bruce Epsley (Vice-Chair) to take over the Chair on his departure.

70. MINUTES

The minutes of 2 October and 11 October 2007 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

71. LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS AND HEARINGS - ISSUES FOR CLARIFICATION

Open Forum speakers:

Mr Francis Morland

The Monitoring Officer (TD) presented a report that reviewed issues and questions which had arisen from local hearings and provided specialist legal advice in response to those issues and questions. The key issues resulting from the advice received were highlighted to Members.

RESOLVED:

That the additional advice presented in the report be accepted and acted upon in future local hearings, subject to an amendment to Section 11 Conduct of Hearing, bullet point 3 in which the word “Committee” should be replaced with the word “Chairman”.

Recorded Vote: Cllr Clark asked that his vote against the resolution be recorded.

72. THE SIZE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

The Head of Legal Services (NM) and the Monitoring Officer (TD) presented a report to review of the size and membership of the Standards Committee in the light of changes to the role of the Committee arising from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

A discussion ensued.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- **Proposes to Council a revised size for the Standards Committee of 12 Members consisting of 4 District Council Members, 4 independent members and 4 Town and Parish Council Representatives.**

- **Proposes to Council that, subject to consultation with Town and Parish Councils in January 2008, the preferred “model” for the Committee is the one identified as the Bath and North East Somerset Council’s model.**
- **Recommends to Council that the changes be made in the first quarter of 2008, so that the new arrangements are in place for April 2008.**
- **Recommends to council that a budget of £10,000 be established in 2008/09 to support dealing with standards complaints.**

Note: Tony Frost left the Chamber at 8.20pm; Bruce Epsley took over as Chairman.

73. DATES FOR EXTRA MEETINGS

Member Support Officer (PD) presented a verbal report requesting Members to add a number of provisional meeting dates to the Committee cycle to deal with matters if they arise.

RESOLVED:

That:

- **the following dates be added to the Committee cycle to deal with matters as they arise; 22 January 2008, 7 February 2008, 21 February 2008 and 23 April 2008.**

74. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Standards Committee will be held on Thursday 12 March 2008 in the Council Chamber, at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

(7.00pm – 8.30pm)

These minutes were prepared by Andrew Mitchell, Member Support Officer, who can be contacted on 01225 776655 ext 242.