

Minutes

Meeting of : Standards Committee
Meeting held in : The Meeting Room, City Hall, Salisbury
Date : Monday 17 March 2008
Commencing at : 1.00 pm

Present:

Mrs J Clarkson (Independent Person) - Chairman
Mr R Job (Independent Person) – Vice-Chairman
Mr M Chandler (Parish Representative) and Mr R Crook (Deputy Parish Representative).
John Crawford (Monitoring Officer) and Steve Milton (Principal Democratic Services Manager) were also in attendance.

Apologies: Councillors J Holt, C G Mills and A Roberts.

42. Public Question/Statement Time:

There were none.

43. Minutes:

Resolved - that the minutes of the last meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

44. Declarations of Interest:

There were none.

45. Bulletins 36 and 37:

Further to the discussion of the matters contained in Bulletin 36, Members' noted that the District Auditor would be attending the next meeting to present the outcome of the ethical governance review undertaken during the latter part of 2007. The Committee noted the advice set out in Bulletin 37 relating to the need to publicise the new arrangements for the local assessment of complaints and considered that all of the publicity measures recommended by the Standards Board for England should be adopted. Members further discussed the need to integrate complaints about members and parish councillors into the council's own internal complaints procedure, to provide a single complaints system for the council.

Resolved:

- (1) that the Monitoring Officer seek to agree arrangements to integrate complaints about members and parish councillors into the council's own internal complaints procedure; and
- (2) that training on the new arrangements and the role of this committee be arranged for district and parish councillors to be delivered through the area committees.



46. Register of Members' Interest - Publication on the Internet:

The Committee considered the report from the Monitoring Officer (previously circulated). Members noted that the register of interests for parish and district councillors was available for inspection by the public at any time and that some authorities chose to publish this information on the Internet. Members raised concerns about this, stressing that the burden on councillors was already onerous and that the publication of private information freely on the Internet may dissuade some members (particularly parish members) from seeking office. In view of the fact that there were no district councillors present it was:

Resolved: that consideration of this matter be deferred to enable the District Council representatives on the Committee to have an input.

47. Preparations for the Local Filter:

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Monitoring Officer.

Recommended to the Council:

- (1) that the Standards Committee be increased to 9 members comprising 3 district councillors with deputies (drawn from each of the three main political groups), 3 Independent Members (an additional member to be recruited) and 3 Parish Councillors (representing the Northern, Southern and Western areas - nominated by the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils) and that the Constitution be revised accordingly;
- (2) that a district councillor be appointed to serve as a member of the Standards Committee (to be drawn from the Conservative group) and that the three main political groups be requested to confirm their deputy members as soon as possible so that training can commence without delay.

Resolved:

- (1) that subject to Council increasing the membership of the Standards Committee to 9 to include 3 Independent Members and 3 Parish Councillors, the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to carry out a recruitment exercise with a view to Council recruiting an additional Independent Member and two additional Parish Councillors via nominations from the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils to this Committee
- (2) that subject to Council appointing an additional Member to the Standards Committee, then the Standards Committee forms 2 sub committees of 3 members from a pool consisting of the members of the Standards Committee each sub-committee to be chaired by an Independent Member. One sub-committee shall be responsible for receiving and assessing complaints and the other sub-committee shall be responsible for reviewing assessment decisions. Hearings will be heard by the Standards Committee pending a review of arrangements following completion of all appointments to any enlarged Standards Committee
- (3) that the Monitoring Officer be requested to procure (in collaboration with other local councils if possible) relevant training for new members.

48. Application for works to trees that are subject to a Tress Preservation Order:

The Committee considered the paper from the Arboricultural Officer.

Resolved: that consideration of this matter be deferred to enable the District Council members to express a view and to enable the Arboricultural Officer to attend the meeting.

49. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Committee is due to be held on Monday 21 April 2008 in the Meeting Room at the City Hall.

*The meeting closed at 2.25 pm
Members of the Public Present: 0*