

# Standards Committee

## Minutes

20 October 2003  
Committee Room 2  
Bourne Hill, Salisbury  
Commencing at 2.00 pm

18. **Present:**  
Mr G A Thompson (Chairman and Independent Person), Mrs M F Lewis (Vice-Chairman and Independent Person), Councillors C G Mills and B M E Rycroft and Mr M Chandler (Parish Representative).

In attendance: Councillor J Walsh (Deputy Member), Mr R G Crook (Deputy Parish Representative), Mrs S J Tovey (Legal Services Manager/Monitoring Officer) and Mr P J Bellas (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

19. **Public Question/Statement Time:**  
Councillor West asked the following question:

"As one month has now passed is the Chairman able to advise me of any progress regarding the action AGREED at 3 (a) and (b) Minute 14 of the Standards Committee of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2003".

In response the Chairman drew Councillor West's attention to the Head of Democratic Services' letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> October 2003 which explained the constitutional issues arising from the decisions taken under minute 14 and the reasons why further consultation was required. He also informed Councillor West of his concerns about the Standards Committee's role in considering the matters contained in his statement set out under that minute.

The Chairman then presented Councillor West with his formal response to his question as follows:-

*"Thank you for your question.*

*I understand that following the last meeting of this Committee the Monitoring Officer spoke to you to suggest a meeting to clarify your statement. I understand that you declined the invitation, as you did not consider it to be appropriate.*

*Since that time the officers have been considering the constitutional issues arising from minute 14 and the most appropriate means of addressing the matters you raised in your statement.*

*On 9<sup>th</sup> October the Head of Democratic Services wrote to you to inform you that there is no appropriate decision making body within the Council that is formally responsible for dealing with the matters you have raised. Whilst not within its remit this Committee is the only Body which could be asked to consider such matters.*

*The Head of Democratic Services wished to consult further on this Committee's role but*

*unfortunately both the Vice-Chairman and I were unavailable at that time.*

*A meeting has now been arranged for Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October. The officers will write to you shortly thereafter on how the matter will be progressed".*

Councillor West informed the Committee that he had compiled a dossier, which he wished to present to the Committee. The Chairman informed him that it was not appropriate for him to receive the dossier at this time pending any decisions arising from the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October.

20. **Minutes:**

**Agreed** – that the minutes of the last meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2003 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21. **Declarations of Interest:**  
No interests were declared.

22. **Procedure for Determination of Complaints referred by the Standards Board:**  
Further to minute 17 (15/9/03) and the training event held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2003 consideration was given to the report of the Legal Services Manager/Monitoring Officer (previously circulated), which included the draft Standards Committee Determinations Procedure Rules.

**RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL ON 8 DECEMBER 2003 -**

- (1) that the Standards Committee Determinations Procedure Rules (as amended and attached as Annex A to the minutes) be adopted;
- (2) that the Rules be appended to the terms of reference of the Standards Committee in the Council's Constitution; and
- (3) that the Standards Committee be granted delegated authority to make any changes to the Rules that become necessary once they have been put into practice or if new guidance is issued by the Standards Board for England.

23. **Matters of Urgency:**

Although the following items did not appear on the agenda for the meeting the Chairman agreed to take them as matters of urgency:-

- (1) The Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that:-
  - (a) The Adjudication Panel had now issued a standard form of appeal.
  - (b) Draft versions of the Officer Code of Conduct and the Whistleblowing Policy had been prepared. It was anticipated that these documents would be brought before this Committee early in the New Year following consultation through the Joint Consultative Forum.
- (2) The Committee discussed the present procedures for the appointment of Independent Persons in view of the Chairman's intention to stand down at the end of the current Municipal Year. The Chairman stated that arrangements should be made to ensure the new Independent Person appointed had the opportunity to attend at least one meeting of the Committee before taking office.

- (3) Further to minute 19 above:-
- (a) The Committee reiterated its need for sufficient background information to be provided if Councillor West's statement of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2003 is brought before the Committee for consideration.
  - (b) Councillor Mills informed the Committee of his personal interest in relation to the matter and informed the Committee that Councillor Walsh would deputise for him at any meeting when Councillor West's statement was tabled for consideration.
  - (c) It was understood that Councillor West might not be able to attend the scheduled meeting of the Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2003 and a reserve date, if required for the consideration of his statement, was set for 24<sup>th</sup> November 2003.  
(NOTE: Subsequent to the meeting Councillor West confirmed his commitments in November and further consideration with regard to meeting arrangements would be required at the informal meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2003).

The meeting concluded at 2.55 pm