

Standards Committee

19 July 2004

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REPORT

IMPLEMENTATION OF APPEALS PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Purpose of Report :

To report to the Committee on the progress made on the implementation of the Appeals Panel recommendations in accordance with minute 59 (2) of the meeting of 19 April 2004.

2. Current Position:

2.1 On the 16th June 2004 a memo was sent to all members of management team, service unit heads and team leaders and a letter was sent to all members setting out a recommended procedure to be followed on occasions where meetings take place with members, officers and members of the public. Copies of the letter and memorandum are attached as an annex to this report.

2.2 Officers from the Legal and Property, Democratic and Personnel Payroll and Training Service Units are looking at the training needs of members generally and are in the process of drawing up a programme of training events. Training needs identified by the Appeals Panel are to be included within this programme.

3. Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee notes this report.

4. Background Papers:

None.

5. Implications:

- **Financial:** None
- **Legal:** None
- **Human Rights:** None
- **Personnel:** None
- **Community Safety:** None
- **Environmental implications:** None
- **Council's Core Values:** excellent service and being fair and equitable
- **Wards Affected:** All

LEGAL AND PROPERTY SERVICES

MEMORANDUM

To: Management Team, Service Unit Heads
& Team Leaders

From: Susan Tovey
Monitoring Officer

Your Ref:

Our Ref: SJT/gej/M/01/08

Date: 16 June 2004

Ext: 227

MEETINGS WITH COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

I am writing this memo as a result of events which have occurred in the past and which recently caused some confusion. I felt it would be helpful to set out some guidelines on procedures.

In the course of our work all of us have meetings with Councillors; sometimes these include members of the public. It may not always be clear as to the status or role of the Councillors at the particular meeting. They may be there as a ward Councillor or as the portfolio holder or sometimes they feel it would be helpful to have an appropriate Officer present where a member of the public has requested a meeting with them.

During the course of the meeting it may be made clear to all concerned as to why the Councillor is attending. However, after some months or possibly years, it may be necessary to refer back to the notes of the meeting and this will not then always be readily apparent. Sometime the position may never have been made clear.

In order therefore to avoid confusion in the future, my strong advice is that whenever you are attending a meeting with a Councillor and members of the public, you should always make notes detailing who is present at the meeting, what it was about and any decisions reached etc. In addition, you should always make clear at the outset the role of the Councillor and you should record this in the meeting notes. The notes should then be placed on the relevant file for future reference and a copy sent to the Councillor concerned. If a subsequent letter is written to the member of the public that refers to the meeting it would be useful to refer to the Councillor's attendance and his or her role.

I would be grateful if you could please make sure that all staff within your units or teams who might attend such meetings are aware of this advice.

I have also written to Councillors to let them know that I am sending this memo and to ask them to assist in the process by making the reason for their presence clear at the start of the meeting.

I appreciate that this may well sound obvious but these steps are not always taken and confusion has arisen in the past and could do so again in the future.

.....
Susan Tovey
Monitoring Officer

TO ALL MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

16 June 2004

SJT/gej/MO1/08

Dear Member

MEETINGS WITH OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

I am writing this letter as a result of events which occurred in the past but which have recently caused some confusion. I felt it would be helpful to suggest some guidelines and let you know of recent advice I have given to Officers in relation to the same circumstances.

Your attendance may be for a number of different reasons, including as a Ward Councillor or as a Portfolio holder, or sometimes you feel it would be helpful to have an appropriate Officer present where a member of the public has requested a meeting with you. Sometimes the reasons for your presence at the meeting will be absolutely clear, on other occasions however it may not be quite so obvious.

I have therefore advised Officers that in order to avoid any confusion notes should always be kept of the meeting and your role should be made clear at the outset and recorded in the notes. I have also advised that the notes should be placed on the file with a copy being forwarded to the Councillor who attended the meeting. In this way your role will have been made clear to all concerned at the time of the meeting and it will also be clear to anyone looking at the file in the future.

Perhaps I could please ask you to assist in the process by always making it clear at the commencement of the meeting the reason you are there.

If you have any queries concerning this letter, please do not hesitate to telephone.

Yours sincerely

SUSAN J TOVEY
Solicitor
Legal Services Manager & Monitoring Officer