

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2011 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, BROWFORT, DEVIZES.

Present:

Wiltshire Council Members

Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Julian Johnson, Cllr Howard Marshall and Cllr Ian McLennan

Town/Parish Council Co-opted Members

Mr William Bailey, Mr Craig McCallum, Mr Paul Neale, Mr John Scragg, Miss Pam Turner, Mr Keith Wallace and His Hon David MacLaren Webster QC

Independent co-opted Members

Mrs Jane Bayley, Mr Michael Cronin, Mr Philip Gill MBE JP, Mrs Isabel McCord (Chairman), Mr Stuart Middleton and Mr Gerry Robson OBE (Vice Chairman)

Also Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Francis Morland

71. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Nigel Carter and Mr Robert Oglesby

72. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2011 were presented

Resolved:

To approve the minutes as a correct record.

73. **Chairman's announcements**

There were no announcements

74. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

75. **Public Participation and Questions from Committee Members.**

There were no members of the public present

76. **Report on Behaviours Framework**

With the agreement of the Chairman this item was taken first.

Cllr Laura Mayes, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Organisational Culture introduced the presentation by the HR Project Officer and explained where the ideas for the behavioural framework came from and how it would be used.

The committee were asked to consider how it could be linked to the new Code of Conduct which will be developed following the publication of the Localism Act.

Following a debate it was

Resolved:

To support the behaviours framework for Wiltshire Council in order to ensure that it is consistent with the Code of Conduct for members to be developed under the Localism Act.

77. **The Localism Bill - Update and Implications for Wiltshire Council**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report which had been written prior to publication of the Act and added that a note outlining the provisions would be circulated to committee members.

Details of the highlights of the Act were summarised and the committee were asked to consider how to take these issues forward. It was suggested that this could be achieved through a Task and Finish Group and the membership was agreed as follows;

Town and Parish Council Co-opted Members

Mr John Scragg

Miss Pam Turner

Independent Co-opted Members

Mr Gerry Robson OBE
Mr Michael Cronin
Mr Philip Gill MBE JP

Wiltshire Councillor
Mr Julian Johnson

Members considered the recommendation made in the report and

Resolved:

- 1. To require the Monitoring Officer to draft a local Code of Conduct for Wiltshire Council that meets the anticipated statutory requirements for local codes, and to bring the draft to the next Standards Committee meeting for consideration. The draft should have regard to previous work and consultation that has taken place in anticipation of the need to introduce a local Code;**
- 2. To require the Monitoring Officer to draft a person specification and job description for the role of independent person and bring it to the next meeting for consideration;**
- 3. To require the Monitoring Officer to draft a report on the proposed composition of and terms of reference for a new Standards Committee and the steps to be taken to dissolve the current Standards Committee for Wiltshire Council and bring it to the next meeting for consideration;**
- 4. To require the Monitoring Officer to consult with parish councils about the implementation of local codes and the desirability, in principle, of adopting a single code of conduct for all of the councils within the area of Wiltshire Council and to provide a briefing note to town and parish councils on this issue;**
- 5. To require the Monitoring Officer to identify resources required to meet the provisions of the Bill as those affect the standards regime in Wiltshire Council;**
- 6. To require the Monitoring Officer to prepare a draft procedure for the receipt, assessment, investigation and determination of complaints under a local code of conduct and permitted sanctions and bring the draft to the next meeting for consideration. The draft should have regard to previous work and consultation that has been carried out in anticipation of a local code;**

7. **To require the Monitoring Officer to bring a further report on the standards provisions of the Localism Bill to this committee after the Bill has received Royal Assent.**
8. **To require the Monitoring Officer to consider training for Town, Parish and Wiltshire Council Councillors.**
9. **To agree to set up a Task and Finish Group to consider the implications of the Localism Act.**

78. **Report on Corporate Complaints**

The Chairman thanked the Head of Governance for her report.

After a short discussion it was,

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

79. **Standards Committee Plan**

The Committee noted the revised Standard Committee Plan.

80. **Status Report on Complaints made under the Code of Conduct**

The Head of Governance introduced the Status Report on Complaints made under the Code of Conduct. The Committee noted the challenging workload.

Resolved:

To note the report.

81. **Outcome of two Standards Hearing Sub Committees**

The Monitoring Officer drew the Committees attention to the outcome of two Hearing Sub Committees. He explained that these two cases had involved significant time delays. Every effort has now been made to follow the imposed deadlines and in general deadlines are met where feasibly possible. He also went on to explain that subject members were now invited to participate in the pre hearing meetings and this had been seen as a positive development and would be used in subsequent hearing procedure.

Resolved:

To note the report.

82. Forward Plan

The Committee's forward plan was presented.

Resolved

To note the forward plan.

83. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00pm – 5.10pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Pam Denton, of Democratic Services,
direct line 01225 718371, e-mail pam.denton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115