



Under minute item 6, Councillor Allen asked whether the Standards Board's definition of "friend" had been circulated as yet to all members of the Planning Applications Committee. Members were advised that the definition, and other recent guidance notes from the Standards Board were set out on the agenda at item 6, and would be circulated to all members following the meeting.

PAD/JPC/ RL  
to note & action

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2004 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

Item 4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this meeting of the Committee

Item 5 **"CRACK THE CODE" - 3rd ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

The Committee noted the agenda and programme for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Assembly of Standards Committees to be held in Birmingham on 13 & 14 September 2004.

The Committee were advised that a maximum of two delegates per Authority were permitted to attend the Conference as places were limited.

**RESOLVED:**

That Mr. Troke and Councillor Allen attend as the Authority's delegates to the Conference.

PAD/ JPC/ RL  
to note & action

Item 6 **STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND – ADVICE & GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS**

The Committee noted the recent advice and guidance issued to all members by the Standards Board for England.

Regarding the Standards Board advice on declaring / registering memberships of political-party councillor associations, Councillor Aherne queried whether individual councillors' membership of political groups (e.g. the Labour party), or membership of organisations such as the ALG or LGA (which were councillor organisations containing subgroups of the various political parties), was included. Councillor Allen also asked whether bodies such as the Urban Commission, a political campaigning body, was included. It was agreed that further clarification on

PAD/ JPC/ RL

these matter be sought from the Standards Board, for report back to members. to note & action

**RESOLVED:**

That the Standards Board advice be circulated to all members for information, with a footnote stating that further advice was being sought from the Standards Board in relation to political-party councillor association declarations. PAD/ JPC/ RL to note & action

Item 7 **ODPM CONSULTATION PAPER - LOCAL AUTHORITIES  
(CODE OF CONDUCT) (LOCAL DETERMINATION)  
(AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2004**

The Committee received the ODPM Consultation paper regarding the extension of the powers of Monitoring Officers to encompass carrying out local investigations into alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct. The ODPM proposal was for certain cases to be referred by the Standards Board for England to local Monitoring Officers for investigation, who would then report their findings to the local Standards Committee for adjudication and judgement.

Members welcomed the ODPM proposals, which had long been anticipated, and agreed that the following responses be made to the questions posed in the ODPM Consultation paper:

PAD/ JPC/ RL  
to note & action

Q1.

& Q2 The powers proposed for Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees were felt to be sufficient

Q3.- All cases investigated by the Monitoring Officer should be referred to the Standards Committee for decision, as proposed in the ODPM consultation paper.

Q4.- The Monitoring Officer should be able to refer cases back to the Standards Board if new evidence came to light.

Q5.- The balance of actions between the Monitoring officers and Standards Board appeared about right.

[Members also requested that the Committee's concerns regarding the lack of an appeal right from the President of the Adjudication Panel's decision not to allow a member's appeal to proceed further be brought to ODPM's attention at the same time.]

PAD /JPC/ RL  
to note & action.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the ODPM Consultation Paper and outline Draft Regulations be noted.

2. That the Committee's response, as outlined above, be agreed for submission to ODPM.

Item 8 **DETERMINATIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS - PROCESS AND PROCEDURES**

The Committee received a further version of the model procedures to be followed locally during investigation / determination hearings which had been revised in the light of comments made by members at the January meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Allen asked for the following further amendments to be made:

- Para 6: delete ... "if they are present, where appropriate".
- Para 11: Insert new paragraph detailing separate procedure where there is no disagreement between the parties.
- Para 14: delete ... "(after the Committee has passed the appropriate resolution)".
- Para 17: delete ... "with a view to promoting higher standards of conduct generally among members".
- Para 23: delete .... "of the hearing". Substitute ... " of coming to a decision. (In normal circumstances, decisions will be made within 10 working days)".

Item 9 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

Meeting began 7:10pm  
Meeting ended 8:15pm

CHAIR.....