

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

—Minutes—

18 JULY 2006

Members Present:

Mr.Christopher Troke (Chairman)
Mr.Steven Moussavi
Mrs Grace Moody-Stuart
Councillor Nicholas Botterill
Councillor Lisa Homan

Officers in attendance:

Lesley Courcouf, ACE (OD) & Monitoring Officer
Michael Cogher, Head of Legal Services
John Cheong, Committee Team Manager

ITEM

ACTION

The Chairman, Mr.Christopher Troke, welcomed to the Committee new members Councillor Lisa Homan and (in absentia) Councillor Donald Johnson.

The Chairman moved, seconded by Councillor Botterill, a Vote of Thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Mr.Moussavi, for his work as Chairman of the Committee during the past Municipal Year.

RESOLVED - Accordingly.

- Item 1 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS
COMMITTEE HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2006**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2006 be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

**ACE(PP)/JPC to
note**

- Item 2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Donald Johnson.

Item 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by members of the Committee at this meeting.

Item 4 COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members noted the Committee's revised Constitution and Terms of Reference, as agreed by the Annual Council meeting on 24 May.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's revised Constitution and Terms of Reference be noted.

Item 5 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Noted the report by the Head of Legal Services on the appointment of independent members to the Committee and the fact that the legislation specified no fixed term of office for these appointments.

Noted that up to now, it had been the practice of the Council to automatically re-appoint existing independent members (providing they continued to be willing to serve) at each Annual Council meeting in order to preserve continuity, experience and knowledge of the Council's ethical governance framework.

Members of the Committee concurred with this as a sensible and pragmatic approach, given the need to understand the Council's ethical governance framework and changes in legislation.

RESOLVED:

1. That the appointment process for the independent members of the Standard Committee be noted.
2. That the Committee reviews the process on an annual basis

**ACE (PP)/JPC
to note**

Item 6. STANDARDS COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Noted that the report had originally been due to be reported to the Committee's April meeting, unfortunately cancelled due to the Local Government Elections on 4 May.

Members noted the report and the proposed work programme.

- Standards Committee -

The independent members of the Committee and Councillor Homan, as a newly returning Councillor, gave feedback on the members' induction programme, which they felt had been useful and pitched at about the right level.

The Monitoring Officer, Lesley Courcouf, suggested that it might be appropriate for members new to the Standards Committee to receive specific individual training on current issues affecting the Committee, the role of STC members, legislation, etc.

Mr.Troke commented that the Standards Board for England website was a useful first port of call for new members and gave full details of relevant current issues, together with SBfE advice and guidance for members as well as their publications .

He reported that he had recently been in touch with the Standards Board who had advised that in future, its role would be reserved for setting policy and dealing with the more serious cases, with all lesser cases being referred to local Standards Committees to deal with direct. This would be further elaborated on at the Annual Standards Committees Conference in Birmingham in October, with national implementation in May 2007.

Mrs.Moody-Stuart and Councillor Homan asked whether any comparative study had been made of other Councils' forward work programmes. The Monitoring Officer, Lesley Courcouf, responded that in preparing the report, other Council's Standards Committees work programmes had been looked at, but were largely similar to LBHF, in being mostly driven by changes in legislation. As such, they were mostly reactive rather than pro-active. She undertook however to bring to the next meeting (October) a report updating members on use of the council's whistle-blowing procedures.

**ACE (OD)/LC to
note for action
October.**

The Chairman, Mr.Troke undertook to contact one or two other authorities to establish how they were managing things, and also undertook to establish contact with Mr.Bruce Claxton, who was in the process of establishing an association of independent members of Standards Committee.

**Mr.Troke to note
for action.**

RESOLVED:

That the Standards Committee proposed work programme be noted, for review as necessary at the next meeting.

Item 7 "BRIDGING THE GAP" – 5TH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF
STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Committee noted that the 5th Annual Standards
Committees' Conference would take place in Birmingham ICC
on 16 & 17 October.

RESOLVED:

That Mr.Troke and one other member (either Cllr.Donald
Johnson or Mr.Moussavi or Lesley Courcouf - depending on
diary commitments) be delegated to attend.

**ACE(PP)/JPC
to arrange**

Item 8 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Members noted the local investigation and determination
procedures, ready in the event that cases were referred down to
the Committee by the Standards Board for England.

Meeting began : 7:00 pm

Meeting ended : 7:41 pm

CHAIR.....