

# STANDARDS COMMITTEE —Minutes—

**4 FEBRUARY 2009**

**Members Present:**

Mr. Christopher Troke (Chairman)  
Mrs. Joyce Epstein  
Ms Grace Moody-Stuart  
Councillor Adronie Alford  
Councillor Nicholas Botterill  
Councillor Stephen Cowan  
Councillor Lisa Homan  
Councillor Donald Johnson

**Officers in attendance:**

Michael Cogher, Assistant Director (Legal & Democratic Services)  
David Bays, Committee Co-ordinator

**ITEM**

**ACTION**

**1**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS  
COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2008**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2008 be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

**KA/DB to note**

**2      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Steven Moussavi.

**ACE/KA/DB to  
note**

**3      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4      CODES AND PROTOCOLS**

**MC**

The Committee reviewed the Statutory Codes of Conduct and LBHF Local Protocols and Guidance to Members, as set out on pages 360-413 of the Council's Constitution, as part of an annual review of the Constitution which was due to take place at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 27 May 2009. This would mean there would be another opportunity for the Committee to recommend any changes at its next meeting on 1 April 2009.

Councillor Homan recorded her dissatisfaction with the way the "Councillors' Support and Other Facilities: Guidelines for Use" was operating, particularly paragraph 5.1 on Advance Session Publicity.

On the Member/Officer Protocol, Councillor Cowan proposed there should be a review of paragraph 5.1, particularly sentence 2 where the practice of copying to Cabinet Members responses to Opposition Members seeking information about Council services was set out.

After discussion, it was

**RESOLVED**

1. That Councillor Cowan propose an alternative wording for this paragraph and forward it to the Chairman.
2. That the Chairman consult the London Standard Committee Chairmen's Virtual Network about this suggestion
3. That officers investigate the practice on this aspect with other local authorities.
4. That a report be presented to the next meeting on this issue.

## **5 CODE OF PRACTICE ON PUBLICITY**

Following a discussion in which Councillor Cowan suggested that it would be inappropriate for the Committee to discuss this consultation paper, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8.10 pm to consult his Independent colleagues.

*The meeting resumed at 8.18 pm*

On resumption, the Chairman stated his view that this item should be considered.

On a vote,

6 FOR  
2 AGAINST

it was agreed to consider and comment on the paper.

Councillor Cowan recorded his opinion that independent advice should have been sought on the inclusion of this item and brought back to the Committee.

The Committee then considered the Questions posed in the Consultation Paper and decided as follows:-

### **Question 1**

On a motion by Grace Moody-Stuart, it was agreed that the response on this should be as follows:

We consider there is other guidance such as the Advertising Standards Authority and the Press Complaints Commission which might play a role in relation to Council advertising and newspaper publication respectively.

The motion was put to the vote:

5 FOR  
3 AGAINST

On a vote, the motion was agreed.

### **Question 2**

The Committee agreed that a single Code should apply to all Authorities.

Grace Moody-Stuart  
moved the following amendment

Add "and that the Advertising Standards Authority and Press Complaints Commission might play a role in this"

The amendment was put to the vote:

**6      ANNUAL NORTH WEST LONDON STANDARDS SEMINAR**

The Chairman reported on his attendance at this event, along with Kayode Adewumi and David Bays. James Goudie QC had presented the main address, followed by a panel discussion. It appeared from the discussion that there had not been a significant increase in complaints against Members; there was generally a balance of Independent and Elected Members considering complaints, as in Hammersmith & Fulham; there was a general feeling that consultations and changes to codes and legislation at all levels had made it very difficult for those concerned to keep up to date; and, finally, that the local resolution of complaints was seen to be more effective for being much quicker to resolve.

**Resolved** - That the report be noted, the delegates be thanked for their attendance and the Chairman of Brent Standards Committee be thanked for organising the event.

**7      WORK PROGRAMME.**

**RESOLVED:** That the Work Programme be noted and agreed.      **ALL**

Meeting began : 7:00 pm  
Meeting ended : 9.59 pm

CHAIRMAN.....