

STANDARDS COMMITTEE2 March 2005
(6.00pm – 6.35pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Barrett-Payton, Boyce, Hymans, McPherson, Smith and Stebbings (Chair).
External Members: Dr Clark, Ms Hobbs (Vice Chair)

FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**05/s/08 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of 5 January 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

05/s/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All members were present.

05/s/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

05/s/11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were present.

05/s/12 UPDATE ON APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL MEMBER

The Committee Manager advised that the advert, as agreed by members, for a new external member will be placed in the Cambridge Evening News on Wednesday, 16 March. Cllrs Barrett-Payton, Hymans, McPherson and Dr Clarke agreed to form an interview panel.

05/s/13 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Director of Central Services (DCS) introduced the report and asked members to comment. She advised that once the views of the Standards Committee were noted the Code would be referred to Civic Affairs and then to Council for adoption.

Cllr Smith asked what checks were made to ensure that the Council was meeting its objectives. The DCS commented that the Council had various functions in place to monitor performance including scrutiny committees and internal/external auditors. Cllr Smith commented that more needed to be done in promoting Area Committees through better advertising and awareness campaigns.

Cllr Barrett-Payton referred to page 19 and was concerned about the fairness of having compulsory training for members and said that it was the role of officers and not councillors to provide specialist skills. He commented that the role of councillors was to represent the public's views and apply common sense to the decision making process. Cllr Barrett-Payton

said that councillor training often involved all day seminars which made it difficult for some councillors to attend due to work commitments. He suggested that a better process could be a 20 minute induction programme prior to formal meetings.

Ms Hobbs commented that councillors must be equipped with certain skills and knowledge in order to understand the technical nature of officer advice (e.g. Planning, Legal and Licensing). She suggested that the council may want to look at the way training was delivered so to make it more accessible to councillors.

Cllr Smith commented that training was essential because common sense and life experience did not cover all the demands of being a councillor. Cllr Hymans commented that while training sessions were valuable and necessary they did create more meetings which made it difficult for some councillors to attend.

The DCS commented that the Improvement and Development Agency referred to its courses for councillors as member development rather than member training.

05/s/14 TENTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

The DCS introduced the report and asked members to note the recommendations. The DCS advised that the Standards Board for England were currently reviewing the Code of Conduct for members. The DCS presented a consultation paper and asked members to complete and return it by the next meeting.

05/s/15 NEXT MEETING

To held on 8 June 2005 @ 6:00pm in The Guildhall.

The meeting ended at 7.00pm

Chair