

STANDARDS COMMITTEE15 March 2006
(6.00pm – 7.30pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Barrett-Payton, Dryden, Hymans, Stebbings.
External Members: Dr Clark, Ms Hobbs (Vice Chair in the Chair)

FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

Prior to the meeting, the Committee watched a training film from The Standards Board for England covering the process involved for investigating a complaint lodged against a Councillor.

06/s/01 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

06/s/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors R Smith and Taylor.

06/s/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

06/s/04 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were present.

06/s/05 REVIEW OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND THE ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

The Committee received an information update and noted the Government's proposed changes to the Code of Conduct and the ethical framework. The main change being that standard complaints will go to the Monitoring Officer and not the Standards Board.

06/s/06 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Members discussed the reference to 'requiring members to have training before performing certain roles...' [page 17 (f), Dimension 3 – Structure and Processes – Roles and Responsibilities of Members]. Councillor Hymans stated that the training needed to be defined. Dr Clark suggested that 'appropriate training' might be a better phrase to use. The Head of Legal & Democratic Services stated that he would reply to Committee on why the document included a 'requirement' and if that was the case, to define the standard required. These comments would be passed to the Civic Affairs Committee on 29 March.

Action by Head of Legal & Democratic Services

Dr Clark asked whether any issues had arisen since the Council had been dealing with applications under the Licensing Act. The Committee was advised that a Licensing Code of Practice, to compliment the Code of Conduct (similar to the Council's Planning Code of Good Practice already in place) had been drafted. However, the Government was due to review the impact of the Licensing Act and its Guidance and it would be sensible to await the outcome of that review prior to progressing further with the Council's own draft Code.

06/s/07 EXTERNAL MEMBERS

The Committee was updated about the recruitment of an external member. Expressions The Committee discussed the length of appointment for external members. Dr Clark did not favour a two four year term which was the maximum allowed and preferred a staggered 3 year term. Cllr Barrett-Payton agreed and thought that external members should in future hold both the Chair and Vice Chair. It was agreed that further consideration be given to the matter in the new Municipal Year.

06/s/08 DATES OF MEETINGS 2006/07

The Committee agreed to meet at 6pm on 7 June, 1 November, 10 January 2007 and 7 March.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

Chair