

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

7 FEBRUARY 2008

Present:

Councillors:

T.W. Crabb

E. O'Hara

Independent members:

Mr M. Litvak (Chairman)

Also in attendance Councillor J.D. Packman, Leader of the Council, and at the invitation of the Committee took part in the discussion.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman, Mr Murray Litvak, introduced Miss Susan Faulkner, who was being proposed by the Selection Panel to fill the vacant position on the committee. (See Minute No 44/08 below)

Apologies: Councillor Mrs J.M. Pinkerton

40/08 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2007 were approved as a correct record.

41/08 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

42/08 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – ORDERS AND REGULATIONS FOR THE NEW LOCAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The Committee discussed with the Monitoring Officer a draft response to the Governments consultation paper which sought views on the detailed arrangements for putting into effect the Orders and Regulations to provide a revised more locally based ethical regime for the conduct of local authority members. The deadline for responses to the consultation paper was 15 February 2008.

The consultation paper covered the following areas:

- The operation of standards committee powers to make initial assessments of misconduct allegations, composition of committees and access to information.
- The Standards Board's new monitoring function and the circumstances where it may suspend a standards committee's function of undertaking the initial assessment of misconduct allegations and for other committees or the Standards Board or joint committees to undertake the role.
- Adjudications by case tribunals of the Adjudication Panel.
- Issuing dispensations to allow councillors to participate in meetings so as to preserve political balance.
- The granting and supervision of exemptions of certain local authority posts from political restrictions.

The Committee noted that it was anticipated that the regulations would be published without further consultation in order to meet the Department of Communities and Local Government suggested timeframe of 1 April 2008. In the event this was the case the committee noted that an extraordinary Standards Committee Meeting would be held on

10 March 2008 with the recommendations from the meeting being submitted to an Extraordinary Council meeting taking place on 25 March 2008.

RESOLVED to approve the responses to the DCLG consultation on the local assessment of complaints under the code of conduct for local authority members as outlined in the report of the Monitoring Officer and as indicated at the meeting.

43/08 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the means of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

44/08 INDEPENDENT NON ELECTED MEMBER APPOINTMENT

The Chairman together with the Monitoring Officer reported verbally on the interviews held for the appointment of an Independent non elected member to the Standards Committee. The Committee noted that four candidates had been interviewed by the Panel and that after careful consideration would be recommending to the Council meeting on 21 February 2008 that Miss Susan Faulkner be appointed to the position. The appointment would be until the Council AGM in May 2009 when consideration would be given for a further four year term.