

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

22 SEPTEMBER 2009

Present:

Councillors:

T.W. Crabb
C.A. Davis
A.P. Hirst
D.L. McShane
G.F. Trussler

Independent members:

Mr M. Litvak (Chairman)
Miss Sue Faulkner (Vice-Chairman)

APOLOGIES: Apologies received from Councillor E. O'Hara

301/09 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2009 were approved as a correct record.

302/09 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

303/09 ICT SECURITY POLICY

The Committee discussed with the ICT Manager the Council's ICT security policy and the action taken to ensure it continued to be robust. The Manager referred to the Government Code of Connection and the Corporate Information Policy.

Circulated at the meeting were a copy of the Personal Commitment Statement which all staff were required to sign up to together with information on how to protect your computer and the councils' network.

It was noted that nine security incidents had occurred over the last year. The committee discussed with the officers action that could be taken when such a breach occurred and what preventative measures were in place to prevent such breaches.

The Committee went on to discuss whether a similar commitment statement should be adopted for all Councillors and how best this could be achieved.

RESOLVED that:

1. The ICT Manager to adapt the staffs personal commitment statement for councillors and submit to the next meeting of the Committee for further consideration; and
2. The information circulated at the meeting on how to protect your computer and the councils' network be sent to all member of the Council.

304/09 REVIEW OF THE PLANNING CODE

The Monitoring Officer reported that the Councils' current Planning Code together with guidance from the Association of Councils' Secretaries and Solicitors had been attached to the agenda. He referred to a meeting arranged to review planning arrangements generally with the Leader of the Council and the review being undertaken by external consultants. He went onto apologise for the confusion the recent email sent to members on planning training had caused.

In considering the current Planning Code the committee particularly discussed how planning applications were called in; involvement of Ward Members; public speaking arrangements at committee meetings and pre application discussions.

The Committee identified that there was a possible need to introduce an interpretation clause at the beginning of the Planning Code. It was also felt that it may be helpful to look at how other council's conduct planning committee meetings.

The Committee indicated that to assist in the review of the Planning Code the views of the previous and current Chairman of the Planning Committee, members of the Planning Committee and the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy could be obtained.

RESOLVED that the review of the Planning Code be deferred until the next meeting of the committee to enable the current and previous Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy to be invited to attend the meeting to give their views on the Planning Code

305/09 NEW STANDARDS REGULATIONS 2009

The Committee received the report of the Monitoring Officer on the recently made regulations to implement some of the outstanding provisions relating to Standards and introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The main areas covered by the regulations that came into force on 15 June 2009 were:

- Allow the Standards Board to suspend arrangements for the local assessment of complaints
- Empower councils to establish joint standards committees
- Empower standards committees to grant dispensations to councillors to allow them to participate in meetings when they have a prejudicial interest.

RESOLVED that the report of the Monitoring Officer be noted.

306/09 STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SUB COMMITTEE

The committee noted that the Assessment Sub Committee meeting arranged to be held on 17 September 2009 had been cancelled due to the complainant receiving and accepting an apology from the member concerned.

RESOLVED to note the position.