

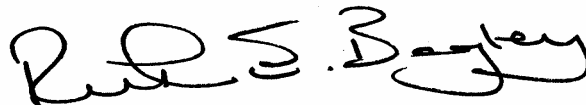
Public Document Pack

Date of issue: 4th April 2008

MEETING	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
	CO-OPTED/INDEPENDENT MEMBERS: The Reverend Paul Lipscomb (Chair) , Dr Henna Khan, Mr Fred Ashmore and Mr Mike Field
	ELECTED MEMBERS:- Councillors Aziz, Dhaliwal, Finn, Latif Khan, Mann and O'Connor
	PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER:- Parish Councillor Nicoline Brandligt
DATE AND TIME:	TUESDAY, 15TH APRIL, 2008 AT 6.15 PM
VENUE:	COMMITTEE ROOM 2, TOWN HALL, BATH ROAD, SLOUGH
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	JUNE COOK 01753 875019

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



RUTH BAGLEY
Chief Executive

NOTE TO MEMBERS

This meeting is an approved duty for the payment of travel expenses.

AGENDA

PART 1

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
	Apologies for absence.		
1.	Declarations of Interest (Members are reminded of their duty to declare personal and personal prejudicial interests in matters coming before this meeting as set out in the Local Code of Conduct)		
2.	Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on 13th February 2008	1 - 2	
3.	Standards Committee Terms of Reference	3 - 4	All Wards
4.	Report back on Meetings with Group Leaders	5 - 6	All Wards
5.	Work Programme 2007/2009	7 - 12	All Wards

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Special facilities may be made available for disabled or non-English speaking persons. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

Minicom Number for the hard of hearing – (01753) 875030



Standards Committee – Meeting held on Wednesday, 13th February, 2008.

Present:-

Co-opted Independent Members:-

The Reverend Paul Lipscomb (Chair), Mr Fred Ashmore and Dr Henna Khan

Elected Members:-

Councillors, Aziz, L Khan, Mann and O'Connor

Parish Councillor Representative:-

Britwell Parish Councillor Nicoline Brandligt

Apologies for Absence:- Mr Mike Field, Councillors Dhaliwal and Finn

PART 1

23. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

24. Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on 14th January 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 14th January, 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25. Department of Communities and Local Government Consultation Document - "Orders and Regulations Relating to the Conduct of Local Authority Members in England"

The Standards Committee considered the report and the responses to the department of Communities and Local Government's Consultation Paper on "Orders and Regulations relating to the conduct of Local Authority Members in England". The Chair informed the Committee that the final version of responses had been fully agreed by the appropriate Officers and himself.

A member raised two points. The first was regarding paragraph 3 and 4 of the consultation. The Member felt that these paragraphs contradicted each other regarding a member of the standards committee who had taken part in decision making on the initial assessment of an allegation being involved in the review of any subsequent request. The Chair informed the Committee that although at first these two paragraphs did appear to contradict each other the second paragraph contained the ultimate recommendation taking into account the resource implications.

The second issue was in relation to question 9. The Member felt that an additional bullet point in the list of circumstances that would trigger suspension of a committees powers should be included which stated that “a disproportionate number of cases that result in maximum sanctions proposed”. The Chair noted that the proposal was related to a breakdown of a Standards Committee and there may be legitimate reasons for a high number of maximum sanctions being proposed.

Resolved – That the responses on the consultation as set out in appendix 1 of the report be submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.15 pm and closed at 6.25 pm)

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Standards Committee **DATE:** 15th April, 2008
CONTACT OFFICER: Steven Quayle
Director of Law & Corporate Governance
(01753) 875004
WARDS: All

PART I
FOR DECISION

STANDARDS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval to a minor amendment to its terms of reference in advance of the more detailed review to accommodate the introduction of the "local filter" for handling complaints regarding Members which is expected to be implemented in June 2008.

2. Recommendation/Proposed Action

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to recommend to the Member Panel on the Constitution that sub-paragraph 8(i) of Article 9 in Part 2 and the corresponding section in Part 3 of the Constitution should be amended to provide for the submission of its Annual Report to Council for information only.

3. Key Priorities – Taking Pride in Slough and making a Difference to Communities and our Environment

Priority 5 – Maintaining excellent governance within the Council to ensure that it is efficient, effective and economic in everything it does.

4. Other Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial, legal (including Human Rights) implications arising from this report.

5. Background/Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Committee, in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer, to produce an Annual Report for submission to full Council on matters within the purview of the Committee. Currently the Standards Committee's Annual Report is submitted to Council for approval and the view is that as the Report is the Committee's own account of its actions for the preceding year it should be submitted to Council for information only. This would not preclude the Council from commenting on the content of the Report and making recommendations thereon to the Committee if it so wished.

5.2 Accordingly, it is proposed that sub-paragraph 8(i) of Article 9 in Part 2 and the corresponding section in Part 3 of the Constitution should be amended to read as follows:

“ In conjunction with the Monitoring Officer to produce an Annual Report for submission to Council for information on matters within the purview of the Committee”

6. Background Papers

Article 9 of Part 2 of the Council’s Constitution.

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Standards Committee **DATE:** 15th April, 2008
CONTACT OFFICER: Steven Quayle
Director of Law & Corporate Governance
(01753) 875004
WARDS: All

PART I
FOR INFORMATION

FEEDBACK ON MEETINGS WITH GROUP LEADERS

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the issues discussed and agreements reached at two meetings held on 3rd and 25th January, 2008 on some poor behaviour by Members at Council meetings.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and make any recommendations they consider appropriate.

3. Key Priorities

3.1 The majority of Council meetings (including Committee and Sub-Committee meetings) are held in public and thus it is imperative that decisions are taken in an open, transparent and orderly fashion. Those elected by the residents of Slough should lead by example given that ethical governance is the cornerstone to clear and sound decision making.

4. Financial, Staffing and Legal (including Human Rights) Implications

4.1 There are no significant financial, staffing or legal implications arising from this report.

4.2 However, where complaints are made about Member behaviour to the Standards Board for England the investigation of those complaints will by their nature have some staffing implications and where a complaint is upheld sanctions may have some legal implications for individual Members.

5. Background/Supporting Information

5.1 As Members will be aware the Audit Commission Ethical Governance Survey highlighted certain issues that had not been achieved in order to ensure that ethical governance was embedded within the Authority. An action plan was put in place to

seek to address those matters and that action plan was formally approved by the Committee in November this year.

5.2 However there were two particular issues that the Committee were keen to address in the short term namely the apparent lack of attendance at compulsory training sessions and the behaviour of Members at certain meetings particularly full Council.

5.3 There has been general acceptance that where Members have busy lives outside of the Council it is sometimes difficult to attend Council (including Committee and Sub-Committee) meetings and compulsory training sessions but it was felt that some improvement was required particularly where Officers had been inconvenienced by presenting compulsory training sessions more than once or even twice.

5.4 The meeting of the Group Leaders held on 3rd and 25th January, 2008 concentrated on Member behaviour and at the meeting on the 3rd the following "ground rules" were laid down by which all Members would be expected to follow:-

- That the Office of the Mayor be respected.
- That the Mayor's rulings and authority be respected and observed by all Members.
- Members should wait to be called to speak and not interrupt others especially with spurious points of order.
- There should only be one speaker at any time – Members should respect each other and remain silent while another Member is speaking. There should be no secondary meetings, undercurrent of noise and/or background chatter.
- If Members have points of personal explanation they should wait until the end of the debate.
- Members should respect the fact that the Mayor and the Officers are trying to keep the meeting running smoothly and should support not undermine the Officers when providing advice to the Mayor and to the meeting.

5.5 An Extraordinary Council Meeting took place on 8th January, 2008 and at the Group Leaders' meeting on the 25th there was a general view that the behaviour of Members had improved and there was consideration as to whether or not the layout of the Council Chamber could be rearranged to assist the debate. In addition to that Officers were requested to investigate the possibility of the speaker system being enhanced so that Members could, through the system, indicate if they wished to speak. Finally a summary of the discussions and agreements would be distributed through the Members' Information Bulletin. This has already taken place.

5.6 The Chair of the Committee and the Monitoring Officer will give further oral update at the meeting.

6. Conclusion

6.1 It is pleasing to report that there has been some improvement in Member behaviour at Council meetings but it will be important for Members to maintain such improvement and continue to comply with the actions referred to in this report.

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 15th April 2008

CONTACT OFFICER: June Cook, Member Services Manager
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 875019

WARD(S): All

**PART I
FOR INFORMATION**

WORK PROGRAMME 2007/2009

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 To advise Members on the current position regarding the Committee's Work Programme and submit its revised programme.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

2.1 The Committee is asked to note/comment on the attached revised work programme (**Appendix A**).

3. **Key Priorities – Taking Pride in Slough and Making a Difference to Communities and our Environment**

Priority 5 – Maintaining excellent governance within the council to ensure it is efficient, effective and economic in everything it does.

3.1 By adopting the action now proposed the Council will help ensure that governance of the highest order is maintained which will also contribute to achieving the Council's other key priorities.

4. **Other Implications**

4.1 There are no financial, nor any direct legal (including human rights) implications arising from this report. There may be some staffing implications in terms of increased work load for certain members of staff.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Please note that it has not been possible to submit to this meeting the report on proposed local arrangements for the "local filter" for handling complaints because we are still awaiting publication by the Department of Communities and Local Government of the relevant enabling Regulations. The implementation date of the locally managed framework is now expected to be 1st June 2008 and not 1st April as originally indicated.

5.2 As soon after receipt of the new Regulations as practicable, a Special Meeting of the Standards Committee will be called to consider proposed arrangements for implementation of the local filter for handling complaints. At this meeting the Standards Committee will also be asked to review its terms of reference in the light of any changes necessitated by the implementation of the locally managed framework.

5.3 The report on gifts and hospitality declared by Members scheduled to be submitted to this Meeting has been deferred to the 16th June 2008. This is to enable a report to be submitted for the whole of the municipal year 2007/2008. The report will also cover the period since the revised Code Local Code of Conduct required all Members to register gifts and hospitality of over £25 in value, as a personal interest in the Register of Members' Interests.

6. Background Papers

None

STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2007/2009

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Lead Officer(s)</u>
15 th April 2007	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report back on results of meeting between Standards Committee Chair, Group Leaders, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to discuss issues raised by the External Auditors' findings from the Ethical Governance Survey . 2. Report back on results of meeting between Standards Committee Chair, Group Leaders, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to consider action to be taken in relation to Members' non-attendance at meetings and "compulsory" Member development sessions. 3. Work Programme update 4. Standards Board for England training exercise on the assessment of complaints (Part 1) 	<p>Committee Chair / Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p> <p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p> <p>Member Services Manager</p> <p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p>
7 th May 2008	Briefing on the Local Code of Conduct and Council's Ethical Framework for all elected and co-opted Members of the Council.	Director of Law and Corporate Governance / Member Services Manager
May 2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Filter for handling complaints – Proposed local arrangements – Still awaiting receipt of Regulations from the DCLG 2. Review Standards Committee's terms of Reference 	<p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p> <p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p>

APPENDIX A

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Lead Officer(s)</u>
16 th June 2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review how effective the revised format for the 2006/7 Standards Annual Review document has been in raising the awareness of the Committee and consider other possible initiatives. 2. Revised draft Officer Code of Conduct to be considered prior to consultation with the Trade Unions, Corporate Management Team, Corporate Consultative Forum and Employment and Appeals Committee 3. Report on gifts and hospitality declared by Members over the last 12 months 4. Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure - results of consultation with the Trade Unions, Corporate Management Team, Corporate Consultative Forum and Employment and Appeals Committee 5. Work Programme update 6. Standards Board for England training exercise on the assessment of complaints (Part 2) 	<p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p> <p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p> <p>Member Services Manager</p> <p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p> <p>Member Services Manager</p> <p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p>
8 th October 2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Results of consultation on the Officer Code of Conduct to be reported back to the Committee and Code to be submitted for consideration prior to its submission to Council for approval. 2. Members' performance monitoring report for 2007/2008 to be submitted. 3. Standards Committee Annual Report 2007/2008 4. Work Programme update 	<p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p> <p>Member Services Manager</p> <p>Director of Law and Corporate Governance</p> <p>Member Services Manager</p>

APPENDIX A

3 rd November 2008	Briefing on the Local Code of Conduct and Council's Ethical Framework for all elected and co-opted Members of the Council. (Repeat Session)	Director of Law and Corporate Governance / Member Services Manager
7 th January 2009	External Auditors to facilitate Ethical Framework workshop for all elected and co-opted Members	Director of Law and Corporate Governance / Member Services Manager / Audit Commission

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