

Standards Committee – Meeting held on Monday, 18th June, 2007.

Present:-

Co-opted Independent Members:-

Mr Fred Ashmore and The Reverend Paul Lipscomb

Elected Members:-

Councillors Sukhjit Dhaliwal, (part of the meeting), John Finn (part of the meeting), Latif Khan and Patricia O'Connor

Parish Councillor Representative:-

Britwell Parish Councillor Nicoline Brandligt

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Aziz and Mann and Mr M Field

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Election of Chair

Resolved - That The Reverend Paul Lipscomb be appointed Chair of the Committee for the current municipal year.

(The Reverend Paul Lipscomb in the Chair)

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2nd April, 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

Resolved - That Mr Mike Field be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the current municipal year.

5. Appointment of Standards (Local Determination) Sub-Committee

Resolved - That Councillors Aziz, Latif Khan and O'Connor be appointed, together with the Independent Co-opted Members, to form a pool from which Members will be drawn to serve on the Standards (Local Determination) Sub-Committee for the current municipal year.

6. Minutes

The minutes of the Standards (Local Determination) Sub-Committee meeting held on 10th April, 2007 were noted.

7. Work Programme 2007/2008

The Member Services Manager submitted for consideration and approval the draft work programme for the Committee for 2007/08. The programme incorporated the actions approved by the Committee at its last meeting which included those agreed in direct response to recommendations made by the Council's External Auditors which in turn had been informed by the results of the Ethical Governance survey.

Resolved – That the draft work programme for 2007/08 now submitted be approved and adopted.

8. Attendance at Parish and Borough Council Meetings

In accordance with the provisions of Section 55 of the Local Government Act 2000 the Council's Standards Committee had the same functions in relation to Parish Councils and their Members for which the Council was the responsible Authority. The Chair was keen that the Committee should become more involved in the work of the Parish Councils and had proposed that, periodically, selected Members of the Committee and the Monitoring Officer should attend meetings of Parish Councils to observe their procedures and the behaviour of their Members. He had also suggested that this should be extended to Council and Committee meetings of this Authority and that the Independent Members should periodically attend these meetings.

The Committee at its meeting on 2nd April, 2007 had approved the Chair's proposals and had resolved that the Committee at this meeting should consider and approve arrangements for the proposed visits to Parish and Borough Council meetings. To this end dates of the Parish Councils' meetings for the forthcoming municipal year were submitted for information and Members were asked to indicate which meetings they would wish to attend.

Resolved -

- (a) That the following Members attend the meetings indicated below:-

Authority Council Meeting	Date	Member(s) Attending
Slough	24 th July, 2007	Mike Field
Slough	26 th September, 2007	Fred Ashmore

Authority Council Meeting	Date	Member(s) Attending
Colnbrook with Poyle	10 th July, 2007	Paul Lipscomb and the Monitoring Officer
Britwell	18 th July, 2007	Fred Ashmore and Councillor Patricia O'Connor
Britwell	17 th October, 2007	Mike Field
Wexham Court	11 th September, 2007	Mike Field and Councillor Sukhjit Dhaliwal

- (b) That the Members report back on their visits to the Standards Committee meeting on 10th October, 2007.

9. Adoption of New Local Code of Conduct/Standards Board for England Statutory Guidance

The Director of Law and Corporate Governance formally reported the publication in April this year of the new model Code of Conduct for Members which the Council had adopted at the adjourned Annual Council Meeting on 21st May, 2007. The model code adopted by the Council included local provisions which only applied to Slough Borough Council. These provisions provided for the incorporation of the following documents which currently formed part of the Council's ethical framework:-

- (a) Planning Code of Conduct for Members and Officers.
- (b) Local Code of Conduct governing relations between elected Members and Council employees.
- (c) Whistle blowing policy and procedure.

Any breach of the provisions within these documents would automatically be considered to be a breach of the Local Code.

The major changes to the former Code were:-

- Abolition of the duty of Members to report all alleged breaches of the Code, however minor.
- The introduction of a new provision of bullying and intimidation.
- Amendments in the way confidential information could be handled.
- Important changes to the definition of personal and prejudicial interest.
- Introduction of special categories of interest e.g. gifts and hospitality and sensitive information.

While the changes to the Code which allowed Members to represent the views of their constituents despite having a personal interest were welcomed

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some concern was expressed about the changes to the definitions of personal and prejudicial interest which were more complicated.

The Standards Board for England had issued statutory guidance on the Code, a copy of which had been sent to all elected and co-opted Members who had been requested to sign an undertaking to abide by the provisions of the new Code.

Resolved - That the information report now submitted be noted.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.15 pm and closed at 6.40 pm)