

Date of issue: 22nd December 2009

MEETING:

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

CO-OPTED INDEPENDENT MEMBERS:

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

ELECTED MEMBERS:-

Councillors P Choudhry, Hewitt, MacIsaac, Mann,
Qureshi and Rasib

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS:-

Parish Councillor Nicoline Brandligt, Parish Councillor
Dalip Rajput and Parish Councillor Laurie Tucker

DATE AND TIME:

MONDAY, 11TH JANUARY, 2010 AT 6.30 PM

VENUE:

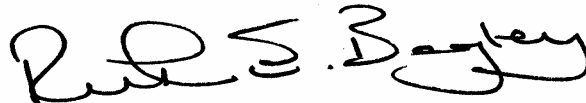
COMMITTEE ROOM 2, TOWN HALL, BATH ROAD,
SLOUGH

**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 I

<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 held on 7th October 2009	1 - 4	
3.	Criteria for Granting Dispensations under the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) England Regulations 2009	To Follow	All
4.	Members' Performance Monitoring - Attendance Records	5 - 8	All
5.	Work Programme 2009/2010	9 - 12	All
6.	Showing of the Standards for England DVD re 'Assessment made clear'		

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.

Standards Committee – Meeting held on Wednesday, 7th October, 2009.

Present:-

Co-opted Independent Members:-

The Reverend Paul Lipscomb (Chair) and Mr Mike Field

Elected Members:-

Councillors Hewitt, Maclsaac and Mann

Parish Councillor Representatives:-

Parish Councillor Nicoline Brandligt, Parish Councillor Dalip Rajput and Parish Councillor Laurie Tucker

Apologies for Absence:- Mr Fred Ashmore, Dr Henna Khan, Councillors P Choudhry and Qureshi

PART I

9. Declarations of Interest

None.

10. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 13th July, 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. Members' Performance Monitoring - Attendance Record 2008/2009

In accordance with the instructions of the Council at its meeting on 26th April, 2006 a record of elected Members' attendance at council, committee, sub-committee, panel and outside bodies meetings and member training sessions during the municipal year 2008/09 were submitted for consideration. As previously requested by the Standards Committee, a separate report on elected and co-opted Members' attendance at meetings of the Standards Committee during the same period was also submitted.

During the presentation of the report, the Chair drew attention to the fact that publication of the information gave an opportunity for members of the public to see and judge how their Members performed in this area of their work as a councillor.

Concern was expressed that in some instances members had valid reasons for non-attendance at meetings and the Committee considered ways in which this could be reflected in future reports. The Member Services Manager suggested that, Members who, during the year under review, had experienced exceptional circumstances which accounted for a significant number of absences could be invited to explain the reason for their attendance record

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and a footnote to that effect could be added to the Report. The Committee accepted that on practical grounds explanatory notes could only be allowed in exceptional circumstances as the reporting of reasons for individual absences would be impracticable.

A Member drew attention to the generally poor attendance record of Members at compulsory training sessions and suggested that this might be due in some part to sessions being arranged at short notice and coinciding with other meetings. The problem of meeting dates coinciding with other commitments was also raised in respect of meetings of outside bodies.

The Member Services Manager indicated that as far as was possible all compulsory training for 2010/2011 was to be incorporated into the Council's corporate meeting diary which was to be submitted to Council for approval in November. This would give Members advance warning of all training dates and hopefully outside bodies, particularly local ones, would have some regard to the calendar of meetings when fixing their meeting dates. Another recent measure introduced to help improve Member attendance had been to offer two alternative dates for the same training session in the hope that Members would be able to attend one of them and would not be penalised for non-attendance at the other. This approach could be adopted in respect of training sessions which were subsequently added to the approved Calendar of Meetings.

A Member suggested that in addition to the current annual performance monitoring report, each committee, sub-committee or panel should receive annually a report on the attendance of its Members. There was some discussion on how this suggestion would work in practice and the Member Services Manager was asked to report back with possible proposals on this matter to the Committee's next meeting.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Members' attendance records for 2008/2009 now submitted be noted.
- (b) That a report formalizing the proposals outlined above and providing suggestions on how the attendance reports for individual Committees etc could work in practice be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

12. Standards Committee (Further Provisions) England Regulations 2009

The Borough Secretary and Solicitor submitted a report summarising the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) England Regulations 2009 which had come into force on 15th June.

The Regulations set out new provisions relating to the initial assessment of complaints; new rules about dispensations in certain circumstances where Members had a personal and prejudicial interest and gave local authorities

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the option to set up Joint Standards Committees to discharge all or some of the standards' functions in Part III of the Local Government Act 2000.

The Regulations relating to the initial assessment of complaints enabled the Standards Board for England (SBE) to suspend the initial assessment functions of local Standards Committees and direct them to refer allegations to the SBE or to the Standards Committee of another local authority in prescribed circumstances. It was not considered that this was likely to occur in Slough as the authority had had no adverse comments from the Board since the standards regime had come into force in 2000.

The subject of all six local authorities in Berkshire setting up a Joint Standards Committee had been discussed by the Berkshire Solicitors' Group which included Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer representatives from each of the six authorities and there was no real enthusiasm to set up any such joint committee.

By law, members wishing to apply for a dispensation were required to submit an application in writing for consideration by the Standards Committee. It was up to the Committee to decide whether or not a dispensation should be granted and what criteria should be applied when considering such a request. The Borough Secretary and Solicitor indicated that such criteria were currently being drafted with a view to them being submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the criteria to be applied in considering Member dispensation requests be submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee for consideration.

13. Standards Committee Work Programme 2009/2010

The Officers submitted for consideration the Committee's revised work programme for the Committee for 2009/2010.

The Committee was advised that training on revisions to the Local Code of Conduct and Members' obligations and responsibilities as representatives of the Council on Outside Bodies, originally scheduled to be held before the end of November 2009, had not yet been arranged as publication of new regulations by the Government was still awaited.

Consideration of the new national Code of Conduct for Employees had also been deferred as publication of the Code by the Government was also still awaited. In the revised work programme submitted consideration of this Code had been scheduled for the Committee's meeting in March 2010 in the hope that the new Code would be published by that date. However, there was no

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certainty that this would happen and the matter might have to be deferred yet again.

Resolved – That the current work programme for 2009/2010 now submitted be noted.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.00 pm)

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 11th January, 2010

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

WARD(S): All

**PART I
FOR DECISION**

MEMBERS' PERFORMANCE MONITORING – ATTENDANCE RECORDS

1. **Purpose of Report**

To set out action agreed by the Committee at its last meeting regarding Members' attendance record and to submit proposals for submitting attendance reports for individual committees/sub-committees and panels.

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

- 2.1 That the action now proposed in respect of future reporting on Members' attendance be approved and adopted with effect from the start of the new municipal year.

3. **Community Strategy priorities**

- 3.1 By putting in place the means for effectively monitoring Members' performance the Council will help ensure that governance of the highest order is maintained which will contribute to achieving the Council's community strategy priorities.

4. **Other Implications**

- (a) **Financial** – None.
- (b) **Risk Management** – There are no specific risks arising from this report.
- (c) **Human Rights Act and Other Implications** – None.
- (d) **Staffing Implications** – There may be some staffing implications in terms of increased workloads.

5. **Background/Supporting Information**

- 5.1 At the Committee's last meeting, during consideration of the Members' attendance records it was suggested that in addition to the current annual monitoring reports, each committee, sub-committee or panel should receive a report on the attendance of its Members during the current year. The rationale behind these additional reports was that Members who failed to attend meetings could be held to account by their peers. There was some discussion on how this suggestion

would work in practice and the Officers were asked to report back to the Committee with possible proposals.

- 5.2 As the purpose of the individual reports is to influence and change Members' behaviour it is suggested that rather than submitting reports at the end of the municipal year a rolling attendance report should be submitted to each meeting. This currently happens in respect of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and seems to work well. An example of how this report would look is attached as Appendix A.
- 5.3 In respect of the annual monitoring reports, as agreed by the Committee at its last meeting, Members who, during the year under review, have experienced exceptional circumstances which account for a significant number of absences will be invited to explain the reason for their attendance record and a footnote to that effect will be added to the Report. On practical grounds explanatory notes will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances as the reporting of reasons for individual absences would be impracticable.
- 5.4 As regards measures to improve Members' attendance at compulsory training sessions, the compulsory training for 2010/2011 has been incorporated into the Council's corporate meeting diary which is to be submitted to Council for approval on 26th January 2010. This will give Members advance warning of all training dates and hopefully outside bodies, particularly local ones, will have some regard to the calendar of meetings when fixing their meeting dates. All compulsory member training/development has recently been reviewed and will not be added to without the approval of the Council's Corporate Management Team. However, if any additional compulsory training sessions are subsequently added to the approved Calendar of Meetings, two alternative dates for the same training session will be offered in the expectation that Members will be able to attend one of them.

6. Background Papers

Minutes for Standards Committee meeting held on 7th October 2009.

7. Appendix

Appendix A -Suggested format for attendance reports

APPENDIX A

Standards Committee
Member Attendance Record 2009/2010

Member	13/07/09	7/10/09	11/01/09	29/03/10
F Ashmore	✓	A		
M Field	✓	✓		
H Khan	✓	A		
P Lipscomb	✓	✓		
P Choudhry	✓	A		
B Hewitt	✓	✓		
Latif Khan	A	N/A (Not called)	N/A (Not called)	N/A (Not called)
Maclsaac	Rule 30	✓		
M Mann	✓	✓		
Qureshi	✓	A		
Rasib	N/A (Not called)	X		
J Walsh	✓	N/A (Not called)	N/A (Not called)	N/A (Not called)
D Rajput	✓	✓		
N Brandligt	✓	✓		
L Tucker	A	✓		

Key: ✓ attended
X did not attend
and did not submit
apologies

P attended part of the
meeting
A submitted apologies
for non attendance

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 11th January 2010

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

WARD(S): All

PART I
FOR INFORMATION

WORK PROGRAMME 2009/2010

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 To submit for information the Committee's work programme for 2009/2010

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

2.1 The Committee is asked to note/comment on the attached revised work programme (**Appendix A**) and identify any other matters they would like the Committee to consider during the forthcoming municipal year.

3. **Community Strategy priorities**

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

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial** – None

(b) **Risk Management** – There are no specific risks arising from this report .

(c) **Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications** - None

(d) **Workforce** -There may be some staffing implications in terms of increased work load for certain members of staff.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Attached (**Appendix A**) is the revised work programme for the Committee for 2009/2010.

5.2 In addition to the tasks outlined in the programme, the Committee, through its Assessment, Review and Local Determination Sub-Committees, may also be required to consider any complaints regarding Members' alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct.

6. **Background Papers**

None

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2009/2010

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Lead Officer(s)</u>
11 th January 2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criteria for granting dispensations under the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) England Regulations 2009 (SQ) 2. Members' Performance Monitoring - Attendance Records (JC) 3. Work Programme 2009/2010 (JC) 4. Consideration of National Code of Conduct for Employees (provisional - awaiting publication of new national code) 5. Showing of the Standards for England DVD re ' Assessment made clear' (SQ/JC) 	<p>Borough Secretary & Solicitor</p> <p>Member Services Manager</p> <p>Member Services Manager/ Borough Secretary & Solicitor</p> <p>Borough Secretary & Solicitor</p>
29 th March 2010	In light of the new national Employee Code of Conduct, the current Member/Officer Code of Conduct to be reviewed, prior to consultation with the Trade Unions, Corporate Management Team, Corporate Consultative Forum and Employment and Appeals Committee (Provisional)	Borough Secretary & Solicitor
12 th May 2010	Training for elected and co-opted Members on revisions to the Local Code of Conduct and Members' obligations and responsibilities as representatives of the Council on outside bodies.	Borough Secretary & Solicitor/ Deputy Borough Solicitor / Member Services Manager
May/June 2010 (Date to be confirmed)	Following consultation, the revised Member/Officer Code of Conduct to be reported back to the Committee prior to its submission to Council for approval (provisional).	Borough Secretary & Solicitor

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