

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
1 JUNE 2005**

Present: Independent members: -
Mr V Kempner (in the Chair)
Ms S Fellows

Councillors Daniel, Hancock and Lock

Apologies were received from Councillors Bigg and Bird.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2005 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

2. REVIEW OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

The Borough Solicitor presented a report regarding a review of the Code of Conduct for Members.

The Standards Board for England was conducting a review of the Code of Conduct for Members, which came into force almost three years ago, on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Government wished to draw on lessons learnt since adoption of the Code and the Standards Board had met with members, Monitoring Officers and others to identify a number of key areas for review.

The key areas identified were, a public interest defence in relation to disclosure of confidential information, the duty of members to report misconduct by colleagues, the line between public and private conduct, personal and prejudicial interests and registering interests.

Appendix A of the report was the full consultation paper entitled, "A Code for the Future". This set out twenty-nine questions and discussed the issues in question, along with the Standards Board's view of the position. The Borough Solicitor's report set out suggested responses to these questions. Members were asked to agree responses to the Standards Board's questions.

RESOLVED that responses to the Standards Board consultation on their review of the Code of Conduct be agreed as set out in the report, subject to the following changes:

- (1) Question 7, this should be limited to activities undertaken in a member's official capacity only;
- (2) Question 8, this answer was not applicable in light of Question 7;
- (3) Question 10, de minimis approach was probably appropriate and was better left to local protocols;

SC.1

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
1 JUNE 2005**

- (4) Question 12, Paragraph 7 should be removed from the Code of Conduct;**
- (5) Question 13, this answer was not applicable in light of the answer to Question 12;**
- (6) Question 18, the term 'public service interest' needed to be clearly defined;**
- (7) Question 20, this was agreed only if the public service interest category was adopted;**
- (8) Question 24, it was agreed that in these limited circumstances the Standards Board suggestion was appropriate. The exception should not extend to members' home addresses. However, members considered that there would be some expectation of support from the Council if a member were facing harassment by virtue of the fact that they were a councillor;**
- (9) Question 25, the duty should extend to membership of private clubs and organisations in adjoining local authority areas;**
- (10) Question 27, members should not have to declare offers of gifts and hospitality that have been declined (by 3 votes to 2). Councillor Hancock asked that his vote against the motion be recorded; and**
- (11) Question 29, the figure of £25 is currently appropriate but should be increased by £5.00 every three years.**

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.46pm)