

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
4 DECEMBER 2008**

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

Councillors Daniel, Fawthrop, Martin, Roberts and  
Silverson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bird

**6 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2008 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

**7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**8. REVIEW OF MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer presented a report seeking the response of the Committee to the Government's consultation on proposed revision of the Code of Conduct.

The consultation paper proposed implementation of the power to extend the Code of Conduct to private life and, as this was a significant change, members' views were required. Proposed responses to the questions posed by the consultation paper were set out in an appendix to the report. The consultation paper was also appended.

**RESOLVED** that the response to the Consultation be agreed as set out in the Appendix to the report subject to amendments made at the meeting, as follows: -

- (1) the addition of the word, "Generally" at the start of response 5 and the addition of a suggestion that if the Standards Committee were to hear such a case it should be considered in part 2 of the meeting so as not to prejudice the court proceedings;**
- (2) add to response 6c a suggestion that the financial threshold for the value of gifts or hospitality be raised to £100 and thereafter be uprated annually in line with inflation;**

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- (3) response 8 be amended to suggest that members be required to disclose criminal convictions; and**
- (4) in response 9 the suggestion be made that the timescale of two months be changed to 60 days because calendar months vary in length.**

**9. REVIEW OF PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION AND  
DETERMINATION OF COMPLAINTS**

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer presented a report seeking approval for revised procedures for investigation and determination of complaints.

The Regulations permitted Standards Committee to appoint a sub-committee to conduct the consideration of reports (ie where the Investigating Officer had made a finding of no failure to comply with the Code of Conduct) and to conduct full hearings. The Standards Board Guidance suggested that the Committee appoint a Consideration and Hearings Sub-Committee, though the Committee was able to undertake these functions under the Regulations.

The revised procedures for investigations and hearings were appended to the report. The proposed amendments took account of the changes required by the Regulations and the Standards Board Guidance. The Committee was requested to adopt the revised procedures with immediate effect.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that: -**

- (1) the revised procedures are adopted with immediate effect;**
- (2) this Committee will conduct the consideration of reports and full hearings into complaints because, whilst having regard to the Standards Board Guidance about the appointment of a Consideration and Hearings Sub-Committee, it is the view of the Committee that consideration and hearing by the full Committee would have the beneficial effects of greater confidence on the part of councillors and complainants in the wider balanced decision-making and of maintaining a level of competence in all members of the Committee, and the size of the Committee is not such as to hamper good decision-making; and**
- (3) The Borough Solicitor, in consultation with the Chair, be authorised to amend the procedure as necessary.**

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**10. STANDARDS TRAINING**

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer presented a report which informed members of the training on the Code of Conduct undertaken in the current municipal year and the levels of attendance of members. There remained 12 elected members who had not attended Code of Conduct training this municipal year.

The report referred to the revised Code of Conduct in respect of equality enactments and the need for members to be aware when they might be in danger of conflict with any of these enactments. 22 members attended Equalities training on 21 October. Another session was being organised for those who did not attend the October training.

The Borough Solicitor had provided comprehensive information to members in respect of declarations of interest. However, there remained some confusion as to when a member had a personal interest and whether this should be declared. A training session on this particular area of the Code was planned for the New Year.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that: -**

- (1) the report be noted;**
- (2) Committee noted the proposals for additional training and wished to urge members to attend standards and equalities training arranged for them; and**
- (3) the Independent Remuneration Panel be recommended to consider a power of suspension of a member's basic allowance where they persistently fail to attend mandatory training.**

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.02 pm)