

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 19 MARCH 2007

PRESENT:- Mr Trevor Davies (Vice-Chair), Mr Paul Morris, Mr Mike Compton and Councillor Maurice Fanning.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Keith Carby and Councillor Melanie Duff.

26. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

27. Minutes

Resolved – 1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2007, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2) That, subject to the revised Code of Conduct being issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DLCG) in time, the Director of Law and Democratic Services Officer call an additional meeting of the Standards Committee on 30th April 2007 to consider the new Model Code of Conduct and recommend to Annual Council on 18th May 2007 the adoption of a new Code of Conduct for Members.

28. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

29. Ethical Framework Update

The Committee received a report from the Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) providing an update of various matters relating to the Ethical Framework.

The Director of Law and Democratic Services outlined the inspection and performance background of the Council and asked for the Committee to consider the Revised Desktop Ethical Audit in the light of the External Audit report issued March 2007 and the progress made in relation to Ethical Standards, and to determine what further action should be taken.

The Committee noted that the Monitoring Officer had recently acted as a peer reviewer on a IDeA Ethical Governance health-check of the London Borough of Richmond.

The Committee received the Standards Board Bulletin for February 2007, and noted that the Monitoring Officer had written to the Standards Board to offer this Committee as a pilot in relation to local filtering of complaints.

The Committee were advised on the progress on consultations on the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Whistleblowing Policy and Media Guidelines for Members which were due to report to the next meeting. It was confirmed that the scheduled review of Council Codes and Protocols be included in the work programme for 2007/08, when the new Code of Members Conduct can be taken

into account.

Resolved – 1) That the Ethical Framework Update be noted;

2) That the Committee approve the Ethical Audit Desktop update subject to the addition of the following areas for action and review:

- No. 1 – That a Standards Conference be held during 2007/08 to share learning and experience on the ethical framework and codes of conduct with the Council's stakeholders and external partners. The Monitoring Officer contact appropriate partner organisations and report back to the next meeting with a proposal.
 - No. 12 – That the Monitoring Officer begin a process for evaluating the implementation across departments of training on the ethical framework within the Officers' Induction Programme and report back to the Committee.
 - No. 13 – That the Monitoring Officer promote a course on Chairing skills in the Members' Training Programme for 2007/08 and report back to the Committee on progress; and that independent members and co-opted members be invited to attend relevant training courses.
 - No. 16 – That the Monitoring Officer investigate use of the Staff Satisfaction Survey to understand staff ethical framework understanding and training requirements.
 - No. 17 – That the Monitoring Officer review the Monitoring Officer Protocol, Member/Officer Protocol and Members' Planning Code of Good Practice in the light of changes in the proposed new Members' Code of Conduct and report to the Committee to recommend appropriate amendments.
- 3) That the Monitoring Officer write to the Committee and Group Leaders to advise on the arrangements for the Standards Board Roadshows to be held in Swindon on 26th June 2007.
- 4) That Members of the Committee advise the Monitoring Officer if they wish to attend the Standards Board Conference on 15-16 October 2007 so that appropriate arrangements can be made.