

**MINUTES OF: THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2010**

**PRESENT: Councillors Aldred, Cheetham, Gill, McInnes, Morris and Sandiford  
Whitworth Town Councillors D. Barnes and Grogan  
Mrs I Divine, Independent Member  
Mr A Neville, Independent Member  
Mr K Pilkington, Independent Member**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Sian Roxborough, Assistant Head of Legal  
Nick Molyneux, Communications Manager  
Jenni Cook, Committee Officer**

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Essex**

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**Sian Roxborough, Assistant Head of Legal, took the Chair for Item 1.**

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Nominations were invited for the Chair of the Standards Committee.

Mrs Irene Divine was proposed and seconded.

Mr Andrew Neville was proposed and seconded.

A majority of Members agreed to carry out a ballot on the nominations and the results were as follows:-

Mrs Irene Divine	Mr Andrew Neville
7 Votes in Favour	4 Votes in Favour

**Resolved:**

That Mrs Irene Divine was elected as Chair of the Standards for the municipal year 2010/11.

**Mrs Divine took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.**

**2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Mr Keith Pilkington was proposed as Vice Chair of the Standards Committee. Mr Pilkington thanked Members for the nomination but declined to stand as Vice Chair.

Mr Andrew Neville was proposed and seconded as Vice Chair of the Standards Committee.

**Resolved:**

Mr Andrew Neville was elected Vice Chair of the Standards Committee for the municipal year 2010/11.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies had been received from Councillor P Steen with Councillor Morris substituting.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

**5. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items of business.

**6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Resolved:**

That the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010 be agreed as a correct record.

**7. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

There were no updates from the Chair.

**8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

**9. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee were circulated and it was noted that these were included within the Council's Constitution.

**Resolved:**

That the Terms of Reference are noted.

**10. MEDIA PROTOCOL**

The Communications Manager outlined the report which invited Members to comment on and recommend adoption of a Media Protocol with respect to Standards Committee matters. The Protocol was intended to provide clear guidance to Councillors, the public and the press as to what information will be disclosed when enquiries regarding Standards complaints are made.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- Concerns regarding the involvement of witnesses and appropriate working practices.
- Future of the Standards Board, in particular with regard to the referral of complaints.
- Use of the words 'punish' and 'honesty' in the Protocol.
- Publication of the complaints procedure.
- Membership of private lodges.

**Resolved:**

1. That the Council be recommended to adopt the Protocol, subject to minor amendments, in particular the inclusion of information on the future of the Standards Board, amendments to some of the wording used and information on membership of private lodges being checked.
2. That if adopted, Council be recommended to agree that all future minor amendments to the Protocol are delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources and the Chair of the Standards Committee.

**11. VERBAL UPDATES**

The Assistant Head of Legal provided verbal updates on the following matters:

Members and Officers Register of Interests

Members were reminded that the Register of Interests must be updated within 28 days and that advice on interests was available from the Legal Department.

Proposed Changes in Standards

Members were updated on the current situation with regards to the Government's proposals to abolish the Standards Board regime. It was noted that the Council must continue with its statutory duties as outlined in the Constitution. Members would be updated with further information as it became available.

Protocol on Forms of Address at Council Meetings

This information is contained within the Civic Protocol. It was suggested that the Protocol be circulated to Members and Officers to remind them of the appropriate conduct at Council meetings. Consideration was given to including an addendum to the Civic Protocol which provided information on correct forms of address and inclusion of this advice in the next Members' Bulletin.

Training 2010/11 Update

An update with regard to training attendance figures was circulated. It was noted that all new Members had attended the Member Induction. It was noted that 6 Members had already attended 5 training sessions. It was confirmed that comprehensive records of training attendance were kept.

Discussion took place regarding penalties for non-attendance of training. It was noted that the preferred approach of the Council and the Group Leaders was to encourage Members to attend training.

**Resolved:**

That the updates and actions agreed therein be noted.

**12. STANDARDS CONFERENCE 2010**

It was noted that the Standards Conference 2010 had been cancelled. Therefore this item would not be tabled.

**13. VOTE OF THANKS**

**Resolved:**

That the former Chair of the Standards Committee, Mr Andrew Neville, be thanked for his work.

**(The meeting commenced at 6.40pm and concluded at 7.45pm)**

\_\_\_\_\_ CHAIRMAN