

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON MONDAY 18 MAY 2009 FROM 7.00PM TO 8.00PM**

*Present:-*

***Wokingham Borough Members:-*** UllaKarin Clark, Pauline Helliard-Symons and Malcolm Storry

***Independent Members:-*** David Comben, Eric Davies and David Soane

***Parish Council representatives:-*** Roy Mantel and Ray Duncan

***Also present:-*** Anne Hunter, Democratic Services Manager  
Colin Lawley, Legal Services Manager

**PART I**

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2009/2010 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED:** That David Comben be elected Chairman of the Standards Committee for the 2009/2010 municipal year.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2009/2010 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED:** That David Soane be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the 2009/2010 municipal year.

**3. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 24 February 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**4. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Anita H Grosz and Mr J Heggadon.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

**7. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions received.

**8. FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

Members of the Committee were provided with an opportunity to discuss observations arising from their recent attendance at town and parish council meetings within the Borough.

During discussion members of the Committee agreed that further visits should be undertaken and that these should be included into the Standards Committee's forward programme for six months time.

In general the Committee had found that declaring interests was more complicated for members of Town and Parish Councils as often they were on many different bodies. It was therefore put forward that consideration should be given to providing training on this matter and this could possibly be undertaken during the Borough/Parish Conference or by members of the Standards Committee providing presentations to individual Town and Parish Councils. It was also felt that Town and Parish Clerks should be asked their views on the way interests were declared by their Members.

The Committee therefore agreed that the Chairman of the Standards Committee would meet with Officers to discuss how the matters raised at the meeting could be taken forward and then e-mail options to members of the Committee.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) the outcome of the attendance by Members of the Standards Committee to town and parish councils be noted;
- 2) the Chairman of the Standards Committee liaise with Officers on how the matters raised at the meeting could be taken forward and then e-mail options to members of the Committee.

#### **9. MONITORING OFFICER PROTOCOL – NOTIFICATION TO COUNCILLORS SUBJECT OF A CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT**

The Committee reviewed the process for the notification of Councillors that a Code of Conduct complaint had been made against them prior to a sub-committee meeting. It was noted that the Standards Board, who had previously been responsible for receiving code of conduct complaints, had not sent out notification letters.

During discussions on whether notification of a complaint should be sent it was noted that there were strong feelings from a large number of Members that they did not wish to receive notification of a complaint about themselves until it was referred for investigation or other action. However concerns were raised that if notification was not sent Councillors might find out a complaint has been received against them by another means. Following further discussions it was agreed not to continue with the current practice of sending written notification to Councillors that a Code of Conduct complaint has been received against them.

The Committee also felt that there was a need to clarify the purpose of Referral sub-committees as there was still some misunderstanding among Councillors. It was agreed that the Chairman would discuss with Officers how best to convey the purpose of these sub-committees.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) the practice of written notification to Councillors that a Code of Conduct complaint has been received against them on receipt of a complaint be discontinued;
- 2) the Chairman meet with Officers to discuss how best to convey to Councillors the purpose of Referral Sub-Committees.

#### **10. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES INFORMAL WORKING GROUP**

The Committee considered whether to establish an informal working group to consider draft committee protocols and processes. The Committee felt that the setting up of a

working group was a good idea and agreed the membership of the group with the proviso that the Town and Parish Council representative would be decided by those members outside of the meeting.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) an informal working group be established to consider draft local procedures and processes comprising of:  
David Comben, Independent member  
UllaKarin Clark, Wokingham Borough Councillor  
Town and Parish Council representative to be advised
- 2) the working group recommend any proposed changes or adoption of new procedures or protocols to the Standards Committee.

*These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee*

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