

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Standards Committee held on
Monday 22 June 2009 at 10.00 am in Meeting Rooms 1 and 2,
King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

J R Legg (Chairman)
Mr R Steward (Independent Member – Vice Chairman),
Mr J Dawson (Parish Representative),
Mr H Malik (Parish Representative), Mr D Shepperson (Parish Representative)
Councillors I Goodson and C Walters,
Nicola Leader (Legal Services Manager/Monitoring Officer)
Wendy Vincent (Democratic Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Mr R Steward be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harwood and Tyler, Mr M Sale and Mr G Brierley.

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Committee held on 24 March 2009, Local Assessment Sub-Committees held on 1 April 2009, 1 May 2009, 11 June 2009 and the Review Sub-Committee on 20 May 2009 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS

The Monitoring Officer advised that since July 2008, 9 complaint forms had been received. It was reported that one complaint form was not forwarded to the Local Assessment Sub-Committee for determination because it clearly related to the behaviour of a Member in their private capacity, and therefore did not amount to a breach of the code.

Out of the remaining 8 complaint forms received, 5 were referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation. One investigation had been completed. The Standards Committee considered the Monitoring Officer's report at their meeting on 9 December 2008 and agreed with the findings of the report that there was no breach of the code. Four investigations were ongoing.

The Local Assessment Sub-Committee had determined that 3 of the complaints received required no further action.

One request had been received for a review. The Review Sub-Committee agreed with the decision of the Local Assessment Sub-Committee in that there had been no breach of the code.

RESOLVED: That the update report be noted.

6 MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

The Monitoring Officer reminded the Committee that it had previously considered the Member/Officer Protocol report that had been to Cabinet on 31 March 2009.

The Standards Committee had expressed concern that consultation should be undertaken with staff. The Monitoring Officer explained that the draft protocol had been discussed with trade union representatives, who were happy with the content and welcomed the formalisation of the relationship between Members and officers.

A further report had been considered by Cabinet on 26 May 2009 recommending the following:

- (1) Cabinet is invited to adopt/recommend the attached draft protocol.
- (2) That the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the protocol should they be required.

Councillor Walters commented that he was surprised that Cabinet had the authority to make the above recommendations.

Following a discussion, it was suggested that an amendment be moved at the Council meeting on 25 June 2009 as set out below.

RECOMMENDED: That the Standards Committee be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the protocol should they be required.

7 ANNUAL STANDARDS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 2009

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Standards Committee to be held on Monday 28 September 2009.

8 NOTIFICATIONS TO PARISH COUNCILS CONCERNING COMPLAINTS

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Standards Committee to be held on Monday 28 September 2009.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman invited the Committee to raise any other issues.

Councillor Walters asked if there was anything coming up in the future for the Standards Committee to consider. In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that there was nothing specific. However, she reported that towards the end of 2008 there was an indication from the Standards Board of a further amendment to the Model Code to include Clerks, but to date no information had been received.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Standards Committee be held on Monday 28 September 2009 at 10.00 am in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 10.15 am