

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**30 September 2002**

Councillors: Haley, *Laird, Makanji, *GMMH Rahman Khan, Reynolds, *Rice, Robertson and *Winskill.
*Mr R. Lovegrove (Chair), *Mr R. Celaire, *Ms I. Francis and *Mr N. Weber.

*Members present.

SCI 1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Haley.

SCI 2. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2002 be confirmed and signed.

SCI 3. MATTERS ARISING:

Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair

Councillor Rice noted that the Council Constitution made provision for the Chairs of Committees to respond to questions regarding the work of their particular committees and indicated that in this regard he felt there was a problem in that the Committee had an independent Chair who would not be entitled to report on the work of the Committee to the Council.

The advice had been that the Deputy Chair, Councillor Haley, could present the minutes to Council and report back on the work carried out. However Councillor Rice was keen that the Chair be entitled to report to the Council and suggested that the issue be considered by the Constitutional Advisory Panel.

RESOLVED:

That the Constitutional Advisory Panel in its review of the Council's Constitution consider the issue relating to the presentation of minutes of the Standards Committee to the Council.

SCI 4. REFERRALS FROM STANDARDS BOARD

The Monitoring Officer reported that no referrals had been received from the Standards Board.

SCI5. MAINTAINING THE REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS(Report of the Monitoring Officer – agenda item 5):

The Monitoring Officer reported on the maintenance of the register of member's interests as required by the Local Government Act 2000.

RESOLVED:

1. That the register was to be updated at least once every calendar month by the office of the monitoring officer taking account of any amendments received during the relevant period and that following this a copy of the amended register will be sent to the Civic Centre.
2. That the office of the monitoring officer email Members and the relevant Co-optees each month to remind them to notify any changes to their entry.
3. That on a quarterly basis each Member/Co-optee be sent a copy of their existing declaration of interests asking them to confirm its accuracy or to provide any necessary amendments.

SCI6. REGISTERING GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY TO MEMBERS (Report of the Monitoring Officer – Agenda item 6):

In accordance with the Model Code of Conduct adopted under the Local Government Act 2000 members and co-opted members are required to register in writing to the Monitoring Officer the receipt of any gift or hospitality over the value of £25. It was noted that whilst not required legally the making of the register of gifts and hospitality accessible to the public and publicising this fact was in line with the general approach of the new ethical framework. Arrangements would be made for the Register to be available for public inspection at the Civic Centre by appointment and this facility would be advertised by the Monitoring Officer in the local press.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Monitoring Officer make available for public inspection the Register of Gifts and Hospitalities on the basis reported and to publicise the fact in the local press.
2. That the pro-forma for declaring the acceptance of gifts and hospitality as attached at Appendix 1 to the report and subject to the minor amendments agreed be adopted.
3. That the Guidance on acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality as attached at Appendix 2 to the report and subject to the minor amendments agreed be adopted.
4. That the Monitoring Officer on a monthly basis email members/co-optees reminding them to update their entries as required.

SCI7. THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND COMMUNICATIONS (Report of the Monitoring Officer – agenda item 7):

The Monitoring Officer reported on proposals to assist the committee in improving its

communication with Members and members of the public.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chair approach the approach the Editors of "Insight" and "Haringey People" to discuss articles on the work of the Standards Committee.
2. That, subject to the agreement of the Leader of the Council, the Chair and independent Members of the Standards Committee attend the meeting of the Council on 14 October 2002, with the Chair briefly addressing the Council and arrangements being made for photographs to be taken for the proposed article for Haringey People.
3. That the Chair draft a letter to all members of the Council and relevant co-optees advising of the intention to place on the Council website general information about the code of conduct, registration of interests/gifts and hospitality, the Standards Committee etc initially to level 3 as laid out in the report (to include names and limited contact details) with the intention to move to level 5 (the full entry in the Register of Interests bar the home address).

SCI8. FUTURE TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS (Report of the Monitoring Officer – agenda item 8): Our Chair agreed to admit the report as urgent business. The report was late because responses to the Monitoring Officer's enquiries were awaited. The report was urgent, as an update needed to be provided to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That an assessment be made of the future training requirements and efforts made to give plenty of notice to members.
2. That the Chair liaise with the Monitoring Officer and Representative Services Manager on the detail of the training.
3. That the Chair write to the Leaders of the political parties seeking their support for the training on the new ethical standards

SCI9. VISITS TO OTHER BOROUGHES AND INVITATION TO THE STANDARDS BOARD CHIEF EXECUTIVE:

We noted that the Chair had been in contact with the Chair of a Standards Committee in a neighbouring Authority and they had discussed mutual visits to meetings to share information and help develop best practice. Following discussion it was agreed that once the new regulations had been proposed it would be appropriate at that point to invite the Chief Executive of the Standards Board to speak to members of the Council and that the Chair would discuss this proposal with the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Monitoring Officer provide the Chair with the contact details for the Chair's of Standards Committees in neighbouring Authorities.
2. That the Chair discuss with the Leader of the Council the issuing of an invitation to the Chief Executive of the Standards Board to address the Council once the proposed new regulations are issued.

SC20. PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERING DISPENSATIONS:

Members discussed the difficulties which could be caused by a member giving very short notice of a need for the granting of a dispensation by the Standards Committee in cases where their disclosure of a prejudicial interest would affect either the political balance of a Committee or 50% or more of a Committee were so affected.

It was acknowledged that there were particular difficulties as the decision to grant a dispensation was not one which could be delegated and therefore required a meeting of the Standards Committee potentially at very short notice.

RESOLVED:

That other Authorities be contacted to establish how they have dealt with this particular issue.

ROGER LOVEGROVE

Chair