

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

18 June 2002

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

*Members present.

Councillor Winskill was also present.

SCI. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY:

Nominations were sought for the position of Chair, following which the three nominees each addressed the Committee. The candidate with the lowest number of votes was eliminated and a further ballot held.

A further ballot was then held between the two unsuccessful nominees for the position of Deputy Chair.

RESOLVED:

1. That Roger Lovegrove, Independent member, be appointed Chair.
2. That Councillor Haley be appointed Deputy Chair.

SC2. APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from Mr Celaire, Councillors Featherstone, Robertson and Laird.

Councillor Featherstone had given due notice that Councillor Winskill was substituting for her.

SC3. TERMS OF REFERENCE: The Committee noted that the proposed Terms of reference, as detailed in the Council's Constitution, differed with those which were agreed by the Committee at their last meeting and adopted by Council on 15 April 2002.

RESOLVED:

That the following terms of reference be approved and that the inconsistency, as detailed above, be considered as part of the Constitution review:

- a. Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors, voting co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives;
- b. Assisting Councillors, voting co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- c. Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;

- d. Monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- e. Advising, training or arranging to train Councillors, voting co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;
- f. Granting dispensations to Councillors, voting co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct;
- g. Dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the monitoring officer on any matter which is referred by an ethical standards officer to the monitoring officer;
- h. Determining any allegations of breach of the Members' Code of Conduct referred to the monitoring officer by an Ethical Standards Officer of the Standards Board for England.
- i. To provide high level oversight of the following :
 - internal and external audit.
 - the whistle-blowing policy.
 - Complaints and ombudsman cases.
 - the authority's constitution.

SC4. MINUTES: The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the provisions relating to hospitality and gifts applied to all members, including the Mayor (Minute SC8).

RESOLVED:

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2002 be confirmed and signed.
2. That a system be put in place for recording hospitality and gifts.

SC5. REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS (Report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer – agenda item 6): Our Chair agreed to admit the report as urgent business. The report was late because returns were still being made up to today and it was necessary to supply the Committee with the most up to date position. The report was too urgent to await the next meeting because the Committee needed to be aware of the current position.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted and the action proposed be endorsed.
2. That Members be reminded to consider their declarations in the light of the outside body appointment at the Annual Council meeting.

3. That Members be permitted to update their registration of interests by email.
4. That officers be requested to investigate other authorities approach in respect of publishing the Register of Interests on their web sites and to report back to the next meeting.

SC6. REPORT ON THE STANDARDS BOARD CONFERENCE (Report of the Chair – agenda item 7):

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

SC7. LOCAL INVESTIGATION AND DETERMINATION OF MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS – DRAFT RESPONSE TO DTLR CONSULTATION PAPER (Report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer – agenda item 8): Our Chair agreed to admit the report as urgent business. The report was late because views of other Monitoring Officers were awaited. The report was too urgent to await the next meeting because the Committee's response was required by 1 July 2002.

It was agreed that the proposed response to the Consultation Paper be circulated to all Members and Independent members and that their views be sought.

RESOLVED:

That the draft response, as amended below, be circulated for Member and Independent Member comment and that the Monitoring Officer be delegated authority to agree the final submission in consultation with the Chair, in the light of comments received:

1. Paragraph 13-15: Add at the end of the third paragraph "There may be other circumstances which will need to be defined, where early investigation by the Monitoring Officer would be appropriate".
2. Paragraph 26 and 27: Delete in the fifth paragraph option (c).

SC8. PROGRESS REPORT ON COMPLAINTS OUTSTANDING AGAINST MEMBERS (Report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer – agenda item 9): 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 the report be noted and in particular the proposals at paragraph 6.13.
2. That consideration be given to the imposition of strict time limits for responses to

Monitoring Officer requests for information.

SC9. TRAINING PROGRAMME ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ETHICAL FRAMEWORK:

RESOLVED:

That the report be deferred to the next meeting.

SC10. PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERING DISPENSATIONS:

RESOLVED:

That the report be deferred to the next meeting.

ROGER LOVEGROVE
Chair