



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 30 JUNE 2010 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Mrs Sheila Brucciani (Independent Member) - Chair

Ms Mary Ray

Independent Member

Councillor Draycott

Councillor Porter

Councillor Thomas

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Clair, Keeling and Potter.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or declare if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them. No such declarations were made.

9. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE: ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2009/10

The Director of Corporate Governance submitted a report regarding issues relating to the Corporate Governance Annual Report for 2009/10.

It was queried whether the Council had carried out the requirements of the Economic Development and Construction Act with regard to Scrutiny. It was noted that the Audit Commission felt that the Council's Scrutiny arrangements were not adequate, and action was being taken to remedy this.

With regard to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, it was suggested that encouragement for Local Authorities to publish more information on their websites, such as any item of expenditure over £500, could reduce the number of FOIA requests. However, it was noted that it could also encourage further requests.

Members considered the issue of whistleblowing, noting that all requests were handled by the Director of Corporate Governance. It was unclear why the Audit Commission felt that it was not fully green.

A request was made for details regarding a particularly large Local Settlement payment within Adult Services, as Members wished to know whether lessons had been learnt and appropriate action taken. The high number of complaints within Adults and Housing was highlighted, but it was noted that these service areas would always generate more complaints due to the nature of the business. The Director of Corporate Governance agreed to provide details to the Committee.

Members queried why the Code of Conduct for officers was not assessed as green, as it was noted as working well. It was reported that it had been recognised that there was a potential period of political flux and maintaining training, raising the Standards profile and good officer/Member relationships would reduce any risk. Members also stated that there was currently no Standards input into the Partnership policies, and this should be actioned.

Members stated that they felt that the procurement strategy should be treated as a priority to move from amber, as value for money was important. It was reported that a procurement officer was working on the matter and it was viewed as a priority. Saving money was seen to be a way of avoiding staff loss.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards Committee recommends to Cabinet that it considers the areas of concern of the Standards Committee, as minuted.