



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY 09 JANUARY 2002 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Ms Jill Bellingham (Independent Member) (Chair)

Councillor Coley                      Councillor O'Brien  
Councillor Draycott   Mrs Caroline Roberts (Independent  
Member)

**17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were requested to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

No declarations were made.

**18. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 12 SEPTEMBER 2001**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2001, having been circulated to Members, be received, taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**19. NEW MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS - IMPLEMENTATION**

The Town Clerk submitted a report which identified the key provisions and requirements of the new Model Code of Conduct for Members and the necessary measures to ensure both compliance and its effective implementation.

It was noted all Members, including co-opted Members, were bound by the Model Code and must agree in writing within two months of its adoption, that they would observe the provisions of the Code. If any Member failed to sign up to the Code within the statutory timescale, they would cease to be a Member of the Council. It was noted that the two month deadline was 29 January 2002 and not 26 January, as detailed in the report.

It was proposed to publish the Registers of Members' Interests on the Internet

and Intranet, although it was noted that under the provisions of the Data Protection Act, a Member could refuse to have their Register details published in this medium.

Members were asked if they supported the proposal that Members be advised to take advice from the Town Clerk, in the first instance, before taking up any issues with the Standards Board for England.

Members were happy for such advice to be given as long as this did not in any way restrict Members referring issues to the Standards Board if they should wish.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) to note that all Members were bound by the new Model Code (as the Council's local code) and must agree in writing within two months of its adoption that they would observe the code and that if any Member failed to sign up to the local code within two months of it being adopted by Council (ie. by 29 January 2002), they would cease to be a Member;
- (2) that the wording for the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and the Undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct, as detailed at Appendix 6 of the report, be noted;
- (3) that the proposal to provide comprehensive briefings for all Members on the new Model Code, alongside mandatory briefing on the Political Conventions (as determined by the Standards Committee), be endorsed;
- (4) that approval be given in principle to the new Register of Members' Interests and Register of Gifts and Hospitality both being held in electronic form, as well as hard copy, and published on the Council's intranet and internet sites, subject to the consent of each Member

## **20. THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND - LAUNCH**

The Town Clerk submitted a report advising the Committee on the remit, functions and responsibilities of the recently launched Standards Board for England and how the Board envisaged interacting with local bodies.

It was noted that the regional launch of the Board had been held on 17 December and was attended by Tom Stephenson and Caroline Roberts. It was noted that all complaints about alleged breaches of the Code had to go to the Standards Board without any local input. The Board would then decide whether to take no further action, refer it back to the Authority's Standards Committee to deal with (possibly with added powers) or send it to the Tribunal. Only if a complaint was referred back to the Authority could the local processes and procedures be set in motion. The referral back mechanism was dependent

on the provision of Regulations made by virtue of Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2000. However, it was not anticipated that these would be issued before June 2002. The Committee expressed concern about the long delay in issuing Regulations, which would determine the future operation of the Standards Committee and agreed that a letter should be sent to the Standards Board voicing it's disappointment in this and that there was no provision under the new Code for any local resolution of issues.

It was also noted that the inter-relationship of the National Model Code of Conduct and the Authority's local Political Conventions was not yet clear. Further consideration would need to be given to this, as necessary, in liaison with the Standards Board, to determine the extent to which breaches of the locally agreed Political Conventions could be dealt with without external reference.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) that the launch of the Standards Board for England and the manner in which it intended to oversee the ethical framework for members of local public bodies, be noted;
- (2) that the process of referral of alleged breaches of the Model Code to the Standards Board, be noted;
- (3) that the dependency of the referral back mechanism of complaints to the Authority's Standards Committee on the provision of Regulations, be noted;
- (4) to note that further consideration would take place as the most appropriate mechanism for dealing with alleged breaches of the Political Conventions which did not involve an associated breach of the Model Code; and
- (5) that the Town Clerk draft a letter to the Standards Board on behalf of the Committee, for signature by the Chairs, expressing the Committee's disappointment in the delay in issuing Regulations, as detailed above.

**21. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 6.36pm.