



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2004 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Ms Jill Bellingham (Independent Member) (Chair)

Mrs Caroline Roberts (Independent Member) Councillor Coley

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No declarations were made.

19. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2003, as entered in the Minute Book on pages 6 to 7 inclusive, copies of which had been circulated to Members, be received, taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the deletion of Councillor Draycott under Members Present and the substitution of Councillor Getliffe.

20. STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND - THIRD ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Service Director (Democratic Services) submitted a report that informed Members of the details of the Third Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, to be held on 13 and 14 September 2004.

Members were informed that the conference, targeted at Council Leaders, Chief Executives, Monitoring Officers and Standards Committee Members would cover a wide range of topics under the banner of "Crack the Code." Members and officers concerned with the Code of Conduct would be given an opportunity to take the platform and share their ideas, opinions and

experiences of the Code of Conduct on the basis that such shared experience could lead to a better understanding of the Code and its application.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted and that the details of the Assembly be circulated to the other Members of the Committee prior to a booking being made.

21. THE ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR ENGLAND APPEAL PROCESS AND FORM

The Service Director (Democratic Services) submitted a report that informed Members that the Adjudication Panel for England had produced an Appeal Form to be used if a Member wished to appeal against a decision of a Standards Committee made in accordance with the Local Determination Regulations.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the existence and contents of the Appeal Form to be used if a Member wishes to appeal against a decision of the Standards Committee, be noted; and
- 2) that the use of the Form be agreed, along with the Adjudication Panel's postal address and website details to be incorporated into the Council's Local Determination Procedure.

22. STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND - GUIDANCE REGARDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - FREEMASONS

The Service Director (Democratic Services) submitted a report that advised Members on the advice of the Standards Board for England in relation to Members declarations concerning membership of the Freemasons.

It was reported that, in the past, the question of whether or not Elected Members should declare their membership of the Freemasons had been guided by a ruling of the Ombudsman.

Following clarification of information to the Standards Board for England by the Masonic movement, the Standards Board had issued guidance, set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the guidance on Declarations of Interest by Freemasons, produced by the Standards Board for England, be noted; and
- 2) that attention be drawn, by letter, to all Members of the Council, including co-opted members, regarding the guidance now produced by the Standards Board for England.

23. AGENDA NOTE - STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND - REVISED LEAFLET - GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT

The Service Director (Democratic Services) reported that the Standards Board for England had published a revised version of its leaflet: 'How to Make a Complaint'. The revised version of the leaflet incorporated the provisions regarding local determination of allegations.

It was noted that copies of the leaflet had been attached for the information of Members of the Committee and that copies would be circulated to all Members of the Council and Corporate Directors. Copies would also be available from Council Customer Access Points. In addition a link would be made on the Members Section of the City Council web site to the Standards Board for England to enable Members of the public to gain electronic access to the document if they so wish.

RESOLVED:

that the action reported be noted.

24. AGENDA NOTE - COMPLAINTS RELATING TO ELECTED MEMBERS

The Town Clerk submitted a table, setting out chronologically the number and nature of complaints received against Elected Members.

The Committee noted that there was one revised entry and one new case reported since the last meeting of the Committee and, regarding the one current case, reported to the last meeting, the Final Report had been published and that the Case Summary was to be forwarded to the City Council shortly and would be reported when received. The Summary was also to be posted on the Standards Board website.

Members of the Committee were asked how they would like to proceed regarding the publication of the findings of the Standards Board for England and, after full consideration, it was agreed that each case would be assessed and then published after using the following criteria: -

- i) Learning points
- ii) Public interest, transparency and openness
- iii) Confidentiality of individual in context of seriousness of complaint.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that, each concluded complaint against a member reported to this Committee be assessed against the criteria set out above to determine whether, and how, to publicise the findings.
- 2) that, with regard to the complaint reported to this meeting and having taken into account the above criteria, a general Press Release to be issued on the most recent case, following the

receipt of the Case Summary from the Standards Board for England.

25. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.07pm.