



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2007 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Mrs Sheila Brucciani (Independent Member)

Councillor Draycott Councillor Coley
Councillor Mugglestone

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENSE

There were no apologies for absence.

24. 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.

25. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2007 be approved as a correct record.

26. MEMBER COMPLAINT - REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

It was agreed that this item be considered in private in accordance with Category 7C of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:-

Category 7C

The deliberations of a Standards Committee or of a sub-committee of a standards committee established under the provisions of Part 3 of the local Government Act 2000 in reaching any finding on a matter referred under the provisions of Section 60(2) or (3), 64(2), 70(4) or (5) or 71(2) of that Act. (Applies to Standards Committee only).

The Town Clerk submitted a report that considered an Investigation Report into the alleged conduct of a Councillor.

Members agreed that a letter of apology would be sent to the complainant on behalf of the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the findings of the Investigation Officer that there has not been a failure to comply with the City Council's Code of Conduct for Members be accepted by the committee.

27. SIXTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

The Town Clerk submitted a report that enabled officers and Members to provide feedback following attendance at the Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, held in Birmingham on 15th and 16th October 2007.

The Chair reported that she attended the conference and found it to be a particularly useful event. She explained that the conference focused on ensuring that attendees understood and were able to apply the new Code and were prepared for the local filtering of complaints. A key component of the day was looking at the circumstances where mediation was effective. She also reported that the changing role of the Standards Board would encourage many authorities to work together.

The Service Director, Legal Services explained that from April 2008, the Standards Board for England would no longer receive complaints centrally nor take the decision whether to refer them for investigation to either ESOs or the authority concerned. Instead, local Standards Committees would receive and assess new allegations, and decide on any action to be taken. He stated that it would be beneficial to carry out an assessment to identify what action was needed to be taken to prepare the authority for local filtering and that a report should be brought to the next meeting that would illustrate the implications of the change and present a number of options for Members to consider.

The Service Director, Legal Services also stated that under the new Code there was provision for confidential information to be disclosed and this was viewed as a potential danger area. He recommended that all Members received advice with regard to this change.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Town Clerk be asked to assess what action needs to be taken to prepare the authority for local filtering to comply with regulations made under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act and report proposals and options to the next meeting of the Standards Committee.
- (2) that the role of the Monitoring Officer be asked to be

clarified and that it be ensured that the proposed filtering process includes mediation.

- (3) That it be recommended that the authority introduces a protocol for dealing with confidential information.
- (4) That a report detailing a number of options for the procedure of local filtering be brought to the next meeting.

28. THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND - REVISED MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - FACT SHEETS AND DVD

The Service Director, Democratic Services submitted a report that brought to the attention of the Committee a range of material produced by the Standards Board for England on the key elements of the Revised Code of Conduct for Members.

The Service Director, Democratic Services explained that a series of fact sheets had been produced that encompassed a variety of topics within the Revised Members Code. He added that the sheets would be distributed to members in a series and would also be published on the Council's Intranet.

Those present watched a screening of the DVD 'The Code Uncovered' that highlighted the key changes to the new code.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the training materials on the Revised Code of Conduct for Members produced by the Standards Board for England be noted.
- (2) That the proposed uses of the training material detailed in the report be endorsed.
- (3) That 'The Code Uncovered' DVD be shown to Members at the beginning of a future meeting of the Development Control Committee.

29. COMPLAINTS RELATING TO ELECTED MEMEBERS

The Town Clerk circulated a report to brief Members on the current number and nature of complaints against Elected Members.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted.

30. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meting closed at 7.00pm.

