

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

24 JUNE 2011

Present :- Mr D. Coe (Independent Member) Chairman
Councillor Abnett
Councillor Anderson
Councillor Bartier
Councillor Chapman
Mr Farmer (Independent Member)
Mr Fitton (Independent Member)
Councillor Gamble
Councillor Spyvee

1. Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED that Derek Coe be appointed Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

2. Appointment of Deputy Chairman

RESOLVED that Peter Fitton be appointed as Deputy Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2011 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Standards and the Localism Bill

The Committee considered a report from the Monitoring Officer providing an update on the Government's proposals in relation to Standards contained in the Localism Bill.

The Monitoring Officer reiterated the key elements of the Government's proposals on the Standards regime contained in the Localism Bill. The proposals were in large part based on the Government's view that a Councillor should not be suspended from office on the basis of a breach of a Code of Conduct based on behaviours.

The Committee noted that the work being undertaken by the Public Law Partnership (PLP) to design a replacement framework. The Committee welcomed this as it would provide a consistent approach and prevent duplication of work. The Monitoring Officer stressed that the framework developed by the PLP would be heavily based on the existing system but would be voluntary rather than statutory in nature. Once the PLP had completed its work, this would be reported to the Standards Committee, who could then make a recommendation to Council, if it was considered appropriate.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) the current position in relation to the Standards for England regime and the progress

made towards the development of a replacement Standards Framework be noted;

(b) the Monitoring Officer be requested to submit further reports on the implications of the Localism Bill once they are known.

5. Appointments to Standards Committee Sub-Committees

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Corporate Management recommending the appointments to the Allegations Sub-Committee, Allegations Appeals Sub-Committee and the Hearings Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED that the membership of the Standards Committee sub-committees for the 2011-12 municipal year be as follows:-

Allegations Sub-Committee

Derek Coe (Independent Member) (Chairman)
Malcolm Bartier (Parish Councillor)
Ray Gamble (Borough Councillor)
Nigel Chapman (Borough Councillor)

Allegations Appeals Sub-Committee

Steve Roberts-Mee (Independent Member) (Chairman)
Bill Anderson (Parish Councillor)
Henry Spyvee (Borough Councillor)

Hearings Sub-Committee

Ian Andrews (Independent Member) (Chairman)
Terence Abnett (Parish Councillor)
Christopher Arnold (Borough Councillor)
Sven Farmer (Independent Member)
Peter Fitton (Independent Member)

6. Review of Local Code of Corporate Governance

The Committee considered a report from the Monitoring Officer reviewing the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance.

The entry for paragraph 3.2.2 should be amended to make clear that the Contract Procedure Rules would not be monitored and reviewed by the Standards Committee. Responsibility for the Contract Procedure Rules lay with Cabinet. It was suggested that a reference to the award of Charter Status for Elected Member

Development should be added to paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.3 as this was external validation of the Council's approach to member development and was relevant to the criteria for paragraph 5.1 of the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Local Code of Corporate Governance be approved subject to the following amendments:

(a) an amendment to paragraph 3.2.2 to clarify the arrangements for the monitoring and review of the Contract Procedure Rules;

(b) the inclusion of a reference to the award of Charter Status for Elected Member Development in paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.3.

7. Standards Committee Work Programme 2010/11 and 2011/12

The Committee considered a report from the Monitoring Officer on the work programme for 2010/11 and 2011/12.

The Monitoring Officer reported that all the items listed in the work programme for the 2010/11 municipal year had been dealt with, with the exception of the adoption of a revised Code of Conduct and the Committee's role in appeals against the designation of politically restricted posts. As regards the revised Code of Conduct, in view of the Government's proposals in the Localism Bill, there was little point in taking this forward. In respect of appeals against the designation of politically restricted posts, proposals in the Localism Bill would transfer this function to the Head of the Paid Service.

In respect of the 2011/12 work programme, It was anticipated that an extra meeting may need to be called to consider the adoption of the voluntary Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) progress against the 2010/11 work programme be noted;

(b) the work programme for 2011/12 be approved.