
MEETING	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DATE	9 NOVEMBER 2007
PRESENT	MRS BAINTON (INDEPENDENT MEMBER, IN THE CHAIR), KIRK, HORTON (VICE-CHAIR), HUDSON AND CRAWFORD (PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER)
APOLOGIES	MRS LEAMAN (INDEPENDENT MEMBER)

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they had in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2007 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

18. SIXTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Members considered a report which informed them of the proceedings of the Sixth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, held in Birmingham on the 15th to 16th October 2007 and attended by the Standards Committee Chair as representative of City of York Council.

The Assembly had focused upon meeting the challenge of the local filter for complaints. Given that the relevant legislation (the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill) was currently going through Parliament, it was unlikely that the regulations would be received much before the start date of 1 April. The feedback from pilot studies on the operation of the local filter had been generally positive. The new Code of Conduct had also been well received. The number of complaints referred by the Standards Board had reduced, with the Board concentrating on complaints with the potential to damage public confidence in local government. This would become an issue for local Standards Committees when they began filtering complaints.

It was reported at the meeting that the Bill had recently received Royal Assent; however, printed copies of the Act were not yet available.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

REASON: So that the Standards Committee is kept advised of the current national picture in relation to the ethical agenda.

19. OUTCOME OF COMPLAINT REGARDING MEMBERS OF UPPER AND NETHER POPPLETON PARISH COUNCILS

Members considered a report which advised of the outcome of a complaint regarding Councillor David Tomlinson, of Nether Poppleton Parish Council, and Councillor Ted Kendall, of Upper Poppleton Parish Council.

The complaint had centred around the issue of whether the councillors had breached the Code of Conduct by failing to include their respective trusteeships of the Poppleton Community Trust (PCT) in the register of interests and failing to declare a prejudicial interest when their respective councils considered matters concerning the PCT.

It was reported that Councillors Tomlinson and Kendal had been nominated by their councils as observers only and were not officially members of the PCT. The ethical standards officer had found that they had no interest in the PCT which would have needed to be registered, nor any personal interest in the matter. The issue of a prejudicial interest therefore did not arise and there was no evidence that either member had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

REASON: So that the Standards Committee is kept advised of the outcome of Code of Conduct cases in the City of York area.

20. ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AUDIT

Members considered a report which informed them of progress on the Ethical Governance Audit, including the outcome of Stage 1, and sought approval for action to be taken in response.

The audit was undertaken as a three-stage process. The first stage was a review of the documentation the Council had in place to support the governance framework. A copy of the final Stage 1 report, published in August, was attached as Annex 1. Its main conclusions were that overall the Council's arrangements to deliver high ethical standards were satisfactory.

Areas where arrangements could be strengthened or best practice adopted were detailed at paragraphs 8-23 of the report. An action plan setting out these issues and action taken, or being taken, to address them was attached as Annex 2. Some issues relating to the composition and role of the Standards Committee would involve amendments to the Council's Constitution. With regard to further progress, the Stage 2 report was still at the draft stage and a programme for the Stage 3 workshops had yet to be arranged. The Stage 2 report would be brought to Members once finalised.

RESOLVED: (i) That the outcome of Stage 1 of the Ethical Governance Audit, and the progress on Stages 2 and 3, be noted.

(ii) That the actions set out in Annex 2 in relation to the various recommendations contained in the Stage 1 report be agreed.

REASON: To ensure the maintenance of high standards of ethical conduct in the Council.

21. REVIEW OF WORKPLAN

Members reviewed the latest version of their work plan for the 2007/08 Municipal Year and agreed some amendments. The amended work plan is attached as Annex 1 to these minutes.

C BAINTON

Independent Member, In the Chair

The meeting started at 3.00 pm and finished at 3.50 pm.

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2007/2008 Workplan for Standards Committee

Ongoing Activities

Cases referred for investigation or determination
 Database of Standards Committee topics
 Standards Board Guidance
 Parish Council Issues
 Member and Officer Training

Programme of New Work

<u>Programme of New Work</u>	<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Preparation for Local Determination	25 January 2008	Work still ongoing. Progress report to be brought to January meeting.
Full Ethical Audit	25 January 2008	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) – contribution of Standards Committee	25 January 2008	Inspection due late Jan. / early Feb 2008. Monitoring Officer has circulated a briefing note to stakeholders & partners.
Assessment of the impact of the White Paper on Standards Committee	25 January 2008	Work still ongoing. Progress report to be brought to January meeting.
Article in News and Jobs (to be done when Ethical Audit results are out)	N/a	Stage I results are now out – article to appear in next edition of News and Jobs (copy to be sent to the Chair).

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