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MEETING	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DATE	23 JANUARY 2009
PRESENT	MRS BAINTON (INDEPENDENT MEMBER, IN THE CHAIR), CLLRS HORTON (VICE-CHAIR), WAUDBY, HUDSON AND TAYLOR (CYC MEMBERS) MR DIXON AND MR HALL (INDEPENDENT MEMBERS) CLLRS CRAWFORD, MELLORS AND FORSTER (PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS)
APOLOGIES	MR WILSON (INDEPENDENT MEMBER)

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#### **24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **25. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 15 December 2008 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **26. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

#### **27. REVIEW OF THE PROTOCOL ON OFFICER/MEMBER RELATIONS**

Members considered a report which presented details of the review of the Officer / Member Protocol currently in place at City of York Council and suggested amendments to the current Protocol.

The review formed part of the actions arising from the findings of the recent Ethical Governance Health Check carried out with the Audit Commission. Other actions had included two awareness-raising sessions for Members and Officers.

A draft amended version of the current protocol was attached at Annex A to the report. Protocols from a number of other authorities were also provided, at Annexes B-E, for the purpose of comparison. Members were invited to decide whether to:

- Retain the existing Protocol unaltered (Option A)
- Agree an amended draft version of the Protocol, based on the existing one, and instruct the Monitoring Officer to undertake a consultation exercise on the resulting document (Option B) or
- Agree a set of criteria to enable a complete re-draft of the existing Protocol (Option C).

RESOLVED: (i) That Option B be approved.

(ii) That the following amendments be agreed to the revised draft Protocol at Annex A:<sup>1</sup>

- In the introduction, include reference to those Officers with certain responsibilities in law and add 'Whistleblowing Policy' to the list of documents in para. 1.2.
- In para. 3.1 add compliance with the Officer Code of Conduct to the list of what Members can expect from Officers.
- In para. 4.2, delete the words '*should, therefore, be avoided*' in the last line and substitute '*Therefore care should be exercised*'.
- Clarify the content of para. 4.3
- In para 4.4, include reference to the information on confidential documents etc. in paras. 7.1 and 7.2 and in the last line change '*will*' to '*may*'.
- Remove para. 5.6.
- Re-word paras. 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 to reflect recent changes to legislation (in particular, the Freedom of Information Act).
- In para. 8.2, include reference to electronic / e-mail communication.

(iii) That, having made the above amendments, the Monitoring Officer be instructed to undertake a consultation exercise based upon the proposed draft document (as amended) and to report the results of that consultation back to the Committee in due course.<sup>2</sup>

(iv) That the consultation be carried out with Group Leaders, Group Secretaries, Directors and Trades Unions.<sup>2</sup>

REASON: In order to agree a more effective Member / Officer Protocol for City of York Council and to respond to the issues raised during the Ethical Governance Health Check.

Action Required

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| 1. Make the agreed amendments to the draft revised Protocol | GR |
| 2. Carry out consultation as agreed                         | GR |

**28. REVIEW OF WORK PLAN**

Members reviewed the work plan for the Standards Committee for the current Municipal Year.

In respect of the item on the Review of the Officer Code of Conduct, previously scheduled for this meeting, it was reported that this had been deferred pending the outcome of Government consultation.

RESOLVED: That the Chair and the Monitoring Officer provide a training session on declarations of interest, to be open to Members of this Committee and any City of York Council Members who wish to attend, and to be held at 2:00 pm on 13 March 2009, before the formal business of the next meeting.<sup>1</sup>

REASON: To improve Members' knowledge on this issue and to help raise the profile of the Standards Committee.

Action Required

1. Arrange training session for 13 March

GR

**29. THE BULLETIN OF THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND - DECEMBER 2008**

Members received a copy of the latest edition of 'The Bulletin', published by the Standards Board for England in December 2008.

The Chair drew attention in particular to the articles relating to feedback on adjourning local assessment decisions and the shortlist for the Standards and Ethics category of the Local Government Chronicle Awards.

RESOLVED: That the information in 'The Bulletin' be noted.

C Bainton, Chair

[The meeting started at 3.00 pm and finished at 4.40 pm].