



Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held at the Bourges Room - Town Hall
on 9 June 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT:

S Boast (Chairman), A Smith (Vice-Chairman), D Whiles, O Menendez and R Nesbitt
Councillors A Miners, M Todd, N Khan and G Murphy
Parish Councillors P Froggitt and D Batty

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Kim Sawyer Deputy Monitoring Officer
Alex Daynes Senior Governance Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Brenda Fearon.

2. Declaration of Interests (if any)

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2010

The minutes of the meeting held 17 March 201 were approved subject to the addition of Councillor Murphy's apologies for the meeting.

The committee requested the breakdown of the political groups relating to the questionnaire in item 6 of the minutes. The clerk advised that this had been done and was available.

4. Monitoring Officer's Report

The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report and advised that only three new councillors had been elected at the recent elections and one of these had been a councillor previously. Therefore, an induction was provided to the three new members.

Training

Councillor Murphy recommended that training was offered to the members of the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee considering new legislation and Planning Acts being produced. The deputy monitoring Officer advised members that the training for the committee was ongoing and did include updates for any new legislation.

The deputy Monitoring Officer suggested that an induction be given to the independent members and the Parish Councillors on the committee on the provisional meeting date of 7 July. The committee **AGREED** to receive induction information on 7 July. The committee further **AGREED** to receive a case study at each meeting to keep up to date with practice in other authorities.

Voting Analysis

It was requested that the planning committee voting analysis at Appendix 2 highlighted the political groups for the members on the committee. Councillor Murphy advised that the analysis

for 09/01317/FUL on 23 March incorrectly showed Councillor C Day as not voting due to the item being in his Ward as this was not in Councillor Day's ward.

Standards for England

The committee discussed the potential decision from the new government to abolish the Standards for England organisation. The committee supported the suggestion that a local standards committee remained in force and to lobby Council and government to retain local schemes.

Work Plan

The committee recommended to the deputy Monitoring officer to continue to plan work for the committee as normal in relation to the work plan at Appendix 5. The deputy Monitoring Officer advised that reviews of constitutional policies were being undertaken by legal officers.

The chairman raised concern about the provision of training for Members as the council no longer had a designated training department. Members recommended using dates where meetings were cancelled due to lack of business as training dates for Members; this training should be relevant and use up to date information. Councillor Todd advised that councillors already received training for their roles and received regular email updates on issues and held pre-meeting briefing sessions.

The committee **AGREED** that a survey of committee chairman be conducted on the level of training received for their roles.

Following a request from Councillor Todd, it was **AGREED** by the committee to receive voting analysis for Licensing and Licensing Act 2003 committees at its next meeting.

5. Annual Report for Council

A draft Annual report was submitted for the committee to note and make suggestions for amendments.

Committee members recommended adding a 'looking forward' paragraph to the document to reflect the determination of the committee to continue following any abolition of the Standards for England organisation. A further recommendation was made to display the statistics in paragraph 5.6 as a table or graph instead of as in-line text and also the attendance at the Neighbourhood Councils in December 2009 could be included as an additional task undertaken by the committee.

The committee **AGREED** that the chairman would include an additional paragraph to provide a local determination that the committee should continue especially considering last year's expenses scandal in government.

The Committee further **AGREED** to submit a letter to the Department of Communities and Local Government supporting the continuation of local standards schemes.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The committee **AGREED** to hold a training session on the provisional date of 7 July with the next full committee to be held on 8 September.

CHAIRMAN
7.00 - 8.00 pm