

# STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 13 January 2009

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Stevenage

**Present:** S. Gillies - Independent (Chair), M. Downing,  
CC, A. Hale - Independent, A. Holland -  
Independent, Mrs. J.E. Lloyd, M. Notley, G.  
Snell, B.G. Underwood

Agenda Item:

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**In Attendance:**

**Start/End Time:** Start Time: 6.00pm  
End Time: 7.16pm

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor P.D. Kissane.

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

### **2 MINUTES - 8 JULY 2008**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July, 2008, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillor Mrs J Lloyd as being present at the meeting.

### **3 STANDARDS COMMITTEE DETERMINATIONS**

The Borough Solicitor presented the guidance issued by the Standards Board for England on the conduct of determinations. The Guidance dealt with the final two stages of the process after a decision had been taken by the Assessment Sub-Committee or Review Sub-Committee that a complaint should be investigated.

The guidance stated that a Consideration and Hearing Sub-Committee should be appointed to consider a Monitoring Officer's investigation report and to hold a determination hearing.

The Borough Solicitor drew members' attention to the model hearing procedures recommended by the Standards Board and to the Public Access to Meetings of the Hearing Sub-Committee section of the report.

A discussion ensued regarding the best method to be followed for the selection of members to the Sub-Committees in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the model documentation referred to in paragraph 3.8.1. of the report be adopted;
2. That the model procedures referred to in paragraph 3.8.2. of the report be adopted;
3. That a Consideration and Hearing Sub-Committee be established with a quorum of three and chaired by an independent member. Its terms of reference shall be to receive and consider an investigation report of the Monitoring Officer or an Ethical Standards Officer of the Standards Board for England;
4. That membership of the current Assessment Sub-Committee and Review Sub-Committee be revoked;
5. That the membership of the Assessment Sub-Committee, Review Sub-Committee and Consideration and Hearing Sub-Committee be comprised of the full membership of the Standards Committee but meetings shall be attended by a sufficient number of members to meet the Sub-Committees' workload and to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.

#### **4 STANDARDS COMMITTEE REVIEW FOR YEAR 2007/08**

The Committee considered a report on the review of the Standards Committee functions against its terms of reference for the municipal year 2007/08.

The Committee noted that some of the leaflets regarding the complaints procedure were out of date and the Borough Solicitor agreed to investigate.

The Borough Solicitor advised that no date had been agreed for the enforcement of protocols and employment contract conditions dealing with ethical standards for officers' behaviour.

It was agreed that a review of the register of Members' Interests and the Register of Gifts and Entertainment be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **5 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN'S ANNUAL LETTER FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008**

The Committee considered a review of the Ombudsman complaint statistics for 2007/08.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **6 URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

There was no urgent Part I business for consideration.

#### **7 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Noted.

## **8 URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no urgent Part II business for consideration.