

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

28 September 2009

Attendance:

Mr P Smith (Independent Member - Chairman) (P)

Councillors:

Barratt (P)

Baxter (P)

Berry (P)

Chamberlain (P)

Izard (P)

Lipscomb (P)

Nelmes (P)

Independent Members and Parish Representatives in attendance

Mr J Barnett (Independent Member)

Ms J Collins (Independent Member)

Ms C Hicks (Independent Member)

Ms J Bond (Parish Representative)

Mr M Evans (Parish Representative)

Mr J Watson (Parish Representative)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Harris (Parish Representative).

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 1 December 2008 be approved and adopted.

3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2009/10 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Izard be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Committee for the 2009/10 Municipal Year.

4. **REVIEW OF 2008/09 AND CURRENT WORK PROGRAMME**
(Report ST75 refers)

The Corporate Director (Governance) drew attention to para 3.3 of the above report and clarified that the complainant had requested that the decision on only one of the four allegations be reviewed. The complainant had also submitted three new allegations against the same parish councillor.

A Member referred to the levels of attendance at Probity & Ethics training and asked whether more could be done to ensure that all Members attended. The Corporate Director (Governance) explained that there was no legal requirement which compelled all Members to attend a probity (or any other) training course. The previous stance of the Committee had been to 'strongly advise' all Members to attend Probity & Ethics training at least every other year, and this was still considered to be the best course. Another suggested option of 'naming and shaming' those who failed to attend was not favoured by the Committee, partly because there could be genuine reasons why a particular Member could not attend on a given date.

The Committee supported the suggestion in para 6.6 that the Independent Members should again monitor proceedings at some of the Council's meetings, to assess how well the Code of Conduct and other good practices were being followed. A further report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee,

With regard to possible updates to the Planning Protocol, it was noted that an informal meeting of the Planning Development Control Committee on 22 October 2009 would be discussing those matters. It was agreed that, depending on the outcome, it may be useful to have selected Members from that Committee attend the Standards Committee, to provide a 'first hand' view about the need for any changes in procedural guidance.

It was also agreed that it would be good practice for the Chairman of Standards Committee to meet annually with the Group Leaders, to discuss probity, ethics and other areas of good governance.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the comments set out above, the report be received and noted.

5. **STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND – BULLETINS**
(Report ST76 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.15pm and concluded at 7.10pm

Chairman