

PRESENT: GROUP CAPTAIN P J RODGERS MBE (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors D R Dickinson, N I Jackson and R Sellars.

Mr R A Daff, Mr J A Hanna, Mr J Krawiec and Mrs C A Lloyd.

Also in attendance: Steven Ratcliffe, Head of Corporate Standards and Rachel Wilson, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor H J Johnson and Mrs M J Overton.

50. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

51. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2010

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 January 2010 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

52. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Statements/announcements by the Standards Champion and Monitoring Officer (minute 41)

RESOLVED

That the change outlined in the resolution for the above item be applied to the agenda for the next meeting of this Committee

(b) Three Way Protocol – Audit, Overview and Scrutiny Management and Standards Committees (minute 44)

It was noted that following a meeting of the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Overview and Scrutiny Management held on Friday 16 April 2010, the Head of Corporate Standards had circulated a new version of the protocol which included 2 slight amendments. This version would then be considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 April 2010 and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 29 April 2010. It was also noted that there would be another meeting of the Chairmen arranged for either June or July 2010. It was also suggested that delegated authority be given to the Chairman to make any further necessary changes on behalf of the Committee at these meetings.

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(c) Inspection of the Register of Members' Interests (minute 48(c))

It was noted that there were still outstanding corrections to be made to the Register of Members' Interests, but it was felt it would be beneficial to tie this in with a training session. Members were informed that there was an unassigned date in the Councillor Development Programme for July 2010 and it was suggested that may be a suitable date for Standards training. It was also suggested that the layout of the form could be looked at to make it more user friendly. Concern was expressed that without some further training, the same omissions could be made when the reminder and new forms were sent out later in the year.

RESOLVED

That a training session be arranged to take place in July where the completion of Members' Interest forms would also be discussed.

53. QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

54. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

55. STANDARDS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Head of Corporate Standards referred to items in Bulletin 47 issued by Standards for England (SfE). Matters referred to in the Bulletin included the Annual Assembly, where Lincolnshire County Council have 3 places booked, and following discussion it was agreed that Councillor D Dickinson and Mr J Hanna would attend this event along with the Head of Corporate Standards. Other items included powers and procedures of new Appeal Tribunals, the risk based approach of SfE, potential pitfall of member use of social networking sites, 'notable practice' research and the introduction of the electronic Standards Forum on the SfE website.

Copies of articles from the Standards for England website it was thought the Committee would find interesting were distributed by the Head of Corporate Standards, these included: case from Wokingham Borough Council regarding acquiring and disclosing confidential information; recommendations of the review of local standards framework; Regulatory Statement; Quarterly Standards update and the Annual Review 2008-09.

Other items which were brought to the attention of the Committee were that the training session planned for 15 February was held and focussed on bias and predetermination, and the SfE DVD on Local Assessment was also shown. The Standards Update Seminar on 4 March 2010 had a good attendance with at least 2 representatives of each local authority's Standards Committee.

An updated copy of the "Working Together" document from the meeting held on 16 April 2010 was distributed, and it was agreed that the Standards Committee

Chairman be given delegated authority to make any more changes at further such meetings.

It was also suggested that it would be necessary to arrange a meeting where the draft Standards Committee work programme 2010 – 2011 would be drawn up.

The Head of Corporate Standards advised the Committee that as the Annual Assembly was being held on 18 and 19 October 2010, there was a clash with the scheduled meeting of the Committee on 18 October, therefore it was suggested that the meeting be re-arranged for the following week on Monday 25 October 2010.

RESOLVED

That the meeting of the Standards Committee Scheduled for 18 October 2010 be re-arranged for Monday 25 October 2010.

56. WORKING GROUPS

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Corporate Standards which outlined the discussions and outcomes arising from meetings of the Committees 2 working groups. Working Group I (Training and Development) last met on 5 March 2010 and Working Group II (Processes and Procedures) last met on 6 April 2010.

(a) Working Group I – Training and Development

The main discussion at this meeting was centred around the training and development manual for dealing with standards related matters. The Committee discussed the running order of the manual as presented, and it was suggested that it would be more useful if Part 2 came before Part 1. Several issues arose during discussion of the training and development manual including the need for the manual to be brought to the attention of new elected members, such as during induction training after a by-election; it was also suggested that the Training and Development Working Group should be responsible for updating the manual when necessary, it was also considered important that everyone was made aware of changes to the Manual, whether big or small.

The Working Group also discussed the production of a DVD which covered the work of the Standards Committee. It was thought by the Committee, that this was something that should be kept on the back burner of the Working Group until there were funds or expertise available, but that they could look at the possibility of producing a story board for the DVD.

(b) Working Group II – Processes and Procedures

This Group considered 5 main items at their meeting which included Media Guidelines; Terms of Appointment & Re-appointment of Independent Members; Added and Appointed Member Protocol; Audit, Scrutiny and Standards (Three-Way) Protocol and Rota of Attendance of Independent Members.

The Committee discussed the outcomes of the Working Group and provided their views on the items. With regard to the appointment and re-appointment of

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Independent Members it was reported that following consultation with Standards for England, it was necessary for there to be an advertisement and interview for all appointed members, and that a re-appointment would be classed as an appointment. Therefore to avoid the problem of having to recruit every year, it was suggested that there were three possible options:

1. To have two terms of three years
2. To have two terms of four years
3. To appoint for five or six years, with no re-appointment possible

It was reported that the time period that Independent Members could be appointed for was discretionary, but that re-recruitment was mandatory, and it was suggested that this may call for a change in the Constitution. It was agreed that this needed to be looked into further and clarification could be sought by checking what other authorities do. It was requested that the Head of Corporate Standards be asked to do a comprehensive report on this matter and bring it to the next meeting of the Standards Committee, and also that the Monitoring Officer Group be consulted as well on this matter.

RESOLVED

1. That the discussions and outcomes of the meetings of the Committee's two working groups be noted.
2. That the Training and Development Manual covering standards matters be agreed subject to the order of Parts 1 & 2 being reversed.
3. That the guidelines for dealing with the media on standards matters be agreed.
4. That the changes to Article 8 and the Added and Appointed Members be deferred until the July meeting of the Standards Committee when the Head of Corporate Standards would bring a comprehensive report on this matter to the meeting.
5. That the Monitoring Officers Group would be consulted in relation to Article 8 and the Added & Appointed Members Protocol.

57. WORK PLAN – UPDATE

RESOLVED

That all members of the Standards Committee be invited to attend the next meeting of the Working Group to consider the Work Programme.

58. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent Items were reported, but it was requested that appreciation for the work carried out by the Chairman on behalf of the Standards Committee be noted and also that during his time as Chairman, Group Captain P J Rodgers MBE had raised the profile of the Standards Committee.

It was also queried whether the independent members would be invited to have their photo's taken for the new ID cards which were being issued to all staff and

Councillors. It was reported that the independent members would be classed as councillors for this purpose.

59. ACTION PLAN

The latest Action Plan for 2010, showing actions completed was tabled by the Chairman.

RESOLVED

That the Action Plan be noted.

60. ARRANGMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 19 July 2010 at 2.00pm

It was also agreed that the next meeting of the Working Group would be held on the morning of Monday 19 July 2010, at 10.30am, to allow all members of the Standards Committee to attend and discuss the Work Programme for the Committee.

The meeting finished at 4.00pm