

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

25th February 2010

PRESENT:-

District Council Members

Councillor Harrison (Conservative Group) and Councillor Mrs. Mead (Labour Group).

Parish Members

Mr. K. Fairbrother (Castle Gresley) and Mr. K. Overton (Willington).

Independent Members

Mr. D.R. Williams (Chairman), Mr. P. Dawn (Vice-Chairman), Mr. P.B. Purnell and Mrs. K. St. Clair.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from District Councillor Murray (Conservative Group), Mr. R. Buxton (Hatton Parish Council) and Mr. R. Pearson (Independent Member).

SC/34. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th October 2009 and of the Special Meeting held on 17th November 2009 were taken as read, approved as true records and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

SC/35. **LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – REVIEW OF SELF-ASSESSMENT**

The Committee received a report which outlined the background and process which had led to the submission of a Review of Self Assessment document and Action Plan and which also invited the Committee to consider the document and report to Full Council on progress.

A revised Local Code of Corporate Governance was adopted by the Council on 3rd July 2008, at which time it was reported that a Self Assessment audit had been carried out by Officers to provide evidence of how the Council had fulfilled or intended to fulfil its commitment to corporate governance. In approving the Code, Full Council had agreed that the Standards Committee should receive half-yearly reports on progress in relation to compliance with the six core principles on which the Code was based. This would ensure that this Committee had a pivotal role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct throughout the authority.

On 9th November 2009, Officers had again met to review the assessment undertaken on 19th May 2009 and a report showing the progress that had

been made in the last six months, with a recalculation of the score where justified, was attached to the report. It had been agreed that an Action Plan, identifying those areas with a score of eight or below, would be created with a view to addressing those issues over the next twelve months. A copy of the Action Plan, indicating the progress made to date was attached to the report.

At the Meeting of the Committee on 21st July 2009, Members had suggested that it would be beneficial if the Chairman could be involved in the Self Assessment process. On 17th November 2009, the Chairman met with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to review the Council's baseline position in relation to Principle 3, to assess both the source documents and scoring.

With regard to future Meetings of the Committee, a Member considered that it would be beneficial to set a cycle of Meetings for the next year, which would increase the Committee's visibility. Accordingly, these Meetings would be incorporated into the Council's cycle of Meetings for the forthcoming municipal year 2010/11.

RESOLVED:-

That the Council be recommended to note progress in achieving the action points set out in the Self Assessment of performance under the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

SC/36. **REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT**

It was reported that an e-mail had recently been received from Standards for England, advising that a new Code of Conduct for Members would not be laid during this Parliamentary session. Communities and Local Government had notified Standards for England that the Government was concentrating on financial instruments and there would not be Parliamentary time available for the Code. Accordingly, a new Code would not now be laid until after the forthcoming Parliamentary Election. Training on the provisions of any new Code would be organised in due course.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

SC/37. **SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS TO STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEES**

Members were reminded that the Local Assessment regime introduced by The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 relating to the assessment of complaints had been operative since 8th May 2008. A summary of outstanding complaints was attached to the report without naming the complainants and the subject Members.

Regulation 8(5) required a Sub-Committee to produce a summary in writing of its consideration of an allegation or a review of a decision. The written summary must record the main points considered, the conclusions as regards the allegation or review of the decision and the reasons for that conclusion; be

prepared having regard to any relevant guidance issued by Standards for England; be available for inspection by members of the public at the offices of the authority for a period of six years beginning with the date of the Meeting; and be given to any parish council of which any Member who was the subject of an allegation referred to in the written summary was a Member.

The financial implications were outlined, indicating that at its Meeting held on 19th March 2009, the Finance and Management Committee had agreed to carry forward £25,000 into 2009/10 for use in relation to the Local Assessment regime.

It was noted that these ongoing reports only referred to any outstanding cases.

RESOLVED:-

That the summary of complaints considered by the Standards Sub-Committees be noted.

SC/38. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th October 2009 were duly received.

COMPLAINTS TO STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEES (Paragraphs Nos. 1 and 2)

The Committee noted the Decision Notices relating to a Meeting of the Standards Sub-Committee (Initial Assessment) since the last Meeting.

D.R. WILLIAMS

CHAIRMAN