

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
ROOM 27, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 16 AUGUST 2011, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT:

District Council Members:

Councillors A Burlton, M Carver, N Poulton
and M Wood

Town Councils' Representatives:

Mrs E Woods

Parish Councils' Representatives:

Mr J Jones
Mr C Marks

Independent Members:

Mr S Bouette
Mr D Farrell
Mr J Morphew
Mr T Vickers

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services

218 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Mr J Morphey and Mr T Vickers were duly nominated for the position of Committee Chairman for the remainder of the Civic Year 2011/12. Upon being put to the vote, each candidate received the same number of votes. Mr Morphey subsequently withdrew his candidature and the Committee duly elected Mr Vickers as Chairman.

RESOLVED – that Mr T Vickers be elected Chairman of the Standards Committee for the remainder of the Civic Year 2011/12.

219 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Mr Morphey for his work during his term of office as Committee Chairman.

The Chairman also welcomed the newly appointed District Councillors to their first meeting of the Committee.

220 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

221 LOCALISM BILL

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report outlining changes to the councillors' standard regime detailed in the Localism Bill.

The Monitoring Officer invited the Committee to formulate its views on the proposed changes, particularly with regard to a non statutory code; the investigation of complaints and the future of Independent Members.

The Committee agreed to make recommendations detailed below on this matter.

RECOMMENDED – that subject to review should there be any significant changes to the Localism Bill upon enactment:

- (A) Council opt for a voluntary code of conduct for Members;
- (B) the Standards Committee be asked:
 - (1) to draft such a code (as referred to in (A) above) based on a revision of the current statutory code and to advise on any necessary consequential changes to other codes and protocols, and
 - (2) to propose a scheme for handling complaints concerning Members' conduct, having regard for the need to respond to such complaints equitably and expeditiously and without any unnecessary expense or calls on other resources, and
- (C) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to write to the clerk of each of the District's parish and town councils to ensure that each one is aware of its probable new responsibilities and inviting co-operation in the preparation and adoption of a common code and machinery for its implementation.

222 DRAFT 2010/11 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Authority's draft Annual Governance Statement for 2010/11.

The Committee considered the content of the report, particularly the element detailing its activities during the year. In response to Members' suggestions, the Monitoring Officer undertook to amend this section of the Statement to provide more detail on the activity of both the Assessment and Review

Sub-Committees and complaints relating to Members of the District and its constituent town and parish councils.

The Committee had no (further) comments on the Statement.

RESOLVED – that Audit Committee be advised that this Committee has no comments (apart from that detailed in the narrative to this Minute) on the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2010/11.

223 WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report inviting the Committee to consider its work programme for the period ending 31 March 2012.

The Committee agreed to add the following items to those currently listed in the programme:

- (1) review of questioning procedures for the Monitoring Officer’s investigation, and
- (2) review of the Council’s Member IT protocol (initially through a virtual meeting mechanism involving a sub-group of Members).

The Committee noted that it would also be invited to consider a reference from a recent meeting of the Assessment Committee at a future meeting.

RESOLVED – that the proposed work programme for the Committee, as now submitted and updated, be agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Chairman

Date