

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Friday, 6 November 2009

### PRESENT

Mr K Ford (Chairman)  
Cllr P Rawcliffe (Vice-Chairman)  
Miss D C Maggs (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs: Mrs J G Lawrence  
A A J Rogers  
J Street

Independent Member(s): Mr J Dann  
Mr K Frazer  
Mr M Jones

Parish Representatives: Mr B Collier  
Dr W J Eilbeck  
Mr J Lewis  
Mr B Saunders

Apologies for Absence: Ms J Hughes  
Cllr G Summerfield

Officers in Attendance: Mrs M Clampitt Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs B Morris Assistant Director Legal &  
Democratic Services and Monitoring  
Officer

STD/09/30 **Minutes**

### **RESOLVED**

***that the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 17 July 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.***

STD/09/31 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

STD/09/32 **Public Participation**

There were no applications from members of the public to speak under the Public Participation Procedure allowed for under Part A4 of the Constitution.

STD/09/33 **Appointment of Town and Parish Members to the Central Bedfordshire Council's Standards Committee**

The Committee received the report of the Monitoring Officer, requesting confirmation of the appointments of Cllr John Lewis and Cllr Brian Saunders as the Town/Parish Council's representatives on the Standards Committee.

The composition of the Standards Committee comprises of:  
Five elected members  
Five independent persons and  
Five members of Town and Parish Councils in the District.

Following the elections in June 2009, Ms J Rollings (Caddington & Slip End Parish Council) did not continue as a Parish Councillor. A letter of resignation was received from Cllr Mrs K Cursons on 3 October 2009. It was necessary to appoint two further Town and Parish Council Members to the Standards Committee.

The Monitoring Officer approached the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Council (BATPC), the Chairman of Standards Committee and the Leader of the Council and it was agreed to approach Councillors who had remained on the selective list following interviews in February 2009.

Cllr John Lewis, of Potton Town Council, was a former Mid Bedfordshire District Councillor and had sat on the legacy authority's Ethics and Standards Committee. Cllr Brian Saunders was a long serving member of Stotfold Town Council and had been their Chairman between 2001 and 2008 and Vice-Chairman for the 9 year prior to becoming Chairman.

The Committee welcomed Cllr John Lewis and Cllr Brian Saunders. In addition, it was requested that a letter of thanks be sent to Mrs Cursons and Mrs Rollings for their service whilst members of the Committee.

**RESOLVED**

***that the appointments of Cllr John Lewis and Cllr Brian Saunders as Town and Parish Members on the Standards Committee be approved.***

STD/09/34 **Notifications of Gifts and Hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Members**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Monitoring Officer, which provided an update on the gifts and hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Council's Members from June 2009 to October 2009.

At the meeting of the Standards Committee on 17 July 2009, Members requested a summary of the gifts and hospitality declared. The summary was attached to the report at Appendix 'A'. Cllr Street noted that his declaration of an outer jacket from the Combined Fire Authority was not listed but he confirmed had been registered and was showing on his register of interest online.

**RESOLVED**

***that the declarations of gifts and hospitality received by Central Bedfordshire Members as set out at Appendix 'A' to this report, be noted.***

STD/09/35 **Standards Committee Article to be placed in Central Bedfordshire Council News Central Magazine**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Monitoring Officer which sought approval of the wording of an article to be published in the Council's News Central Magazine which would be delivered to every household in the area.

Members considered the News Central article which would raise the profile of standards in Central Bedfordshire. The article would include the new slogan which was approved later in the agenda (see minute no. STD/09/ ).

Members also requested a number of changes including the addition of the sentence 'The Standards Committee has an essential job to do in maintaining a robust ethical environment in which the Council can operate'.

It was agreed that there would be a follow up article at the end of the municipal year which would show how many assessments, reviews and hearings had been heard.

**RESOLVED**

***that the article which will be published in the Council's News Central Magazine, be approved, subject to the changes highlighted in the preamble above.***

STD/09/36 **Development of a Slogan for Standards**

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer which requested consideration of the adoption of a slogan to be used in respect of the promotion of the work of the Standards Committee within Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members will recall that both Central Bedfordshire Council and Town and Parish Council training sessions workshops were held and suggestions were received and a list of the suitable slogans were attached to the report at Appendix 'A'.

The Committee nominated four phrases for consideration and voting, they were the following:

- Standards Matter
- Simply Standards
- Excel with Standards
- Maintaining Standards

A vote was taken and the clear winner was 'Standards Matter'.

**RESOLVED**

***that the slogan 'Standards Matter' to promote standards within Central Bedfordshire from the list set out in Appendix 'A' to the report of the Monitoring Officer, be adopted.***

STD/09/37 **Review of Outside Bodies**

The Committee received the report of the Monitoring Officer which provided an update advice note that has been issued to all Central Bedfordshire Council Members.

Over the last year a review of the outside bodies for the three legacy authorities has been carried out. Three databases were combined with 200 organisations being reviewed.

In November 2008 the Group Leaders received a listing and asked to make appointments from 1 April to June 2009. Following the elections in June 2009 an additional report went to Council and a final version was completed on 30 July 2009 by the Group Leaders.

The appendix to the report was a 'best practice guide'. It was noted that any development of a policy would be considered by the General Purposes Committee, which would include a definition of outside bodies, establishment of a criteria for appointments and nominations, generalised advice on the roles and responsibilities and lastly address governance issues.

**RESOLVED**

***that the guidance for outside bodies as detailed in Appendix 'A' to the report of the Monitoring Officer be noted.***

STD/09/38 **Update on Current Standard Matters**

The Committee received the report of the Monitoring Officer which advised Members on the latest position relating to Assessment, Reviews and Hearings.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that this would be a regular report which details the current reviews and hearings. Members noted the update on several cases listed in Appendix A.

In response to a query it was confirmed that the item which was referred for investigation in July had included interviewing 8 witnesses. The Investigating Officer's report was due by the end of November.

**RESOLVED**

***that the update on Current Standards Committee Matters as attached at Appendix 'A' to the report of the Monitoring Officer, be noted.***

STD/09/39 **Standard Board Bulletin No 45**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Monitoring Officer, which drew to Members' attention the latest Bulletin issued by the Standards for England.

It was noted that the outcome of the review of the Code of Conduct was scheduled for January 2010.

The Adjudication Panel had been renamed as the 'General Regulatory Chamber'.

**RESOLVED**

***that the Standards Bulletin No. 45 as attached to the report of the Monitoring Officer, be noted.***

STD/09/40 **Bringing Standards into Focus - Standards for England Assembly 12 - 13 October 2009**

The Committee received the report of the Monitoring Officer which provided an update on the attendance at the Annual Assembly of the Standards for England at their Conference on 12 and 13 October 2009.

The Committee received also the comments from both Brian Collier and Ken Frazer, who had also attended the conference.

It was noted that a typographical error was listed under the Financial section of the Corporate Implications, it stated 'four' instead of 'two' delegates.

**RESOLVED**

***that the report attached at Appendix 'A' in respect of attendance at the Standards for England Annual Assembly Conference on 12 and 13 October 2009 in Birmingham, be noted.***

STD/09/41 **Standards Training for Central Bedfordshire Council and Town/Parish Council Members**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Monitoring Officer which drew to Members' attention the training delivered to Central Bedfordshire Members and Town and Parish Councils and the feedback received.

The Monitoring Officer thanked the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (Independent Member) for their support at the Town and Parish Council training events. The event helped to develop contacts with the Town and Parish Councils and it was noted that the message had been delivered successfully.

Work with the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (BATPC) was underway and training will be delivered between January and March 2010.

The Chairman confirmed to the Committee that the sessions had been well appreciated and the Monitoring Officer had done a great job as trainer.

**RESOLVED**

***that the report attached at Appendix 'A', in respect of the training delivered and feedback received, to the report of the Monitoring Officer, be noted.***

STD/09/42 **"Assessment Made Clear"**

The Committee watched a DVD from Standards for England which provided an overview of the Standards Assessment process.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.15 a.m..)