

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Friday, 28 October 2011

PRESENT

Mr K Ford (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs J G Lawrence (Vice-Chairman Elected Representative)
Miss D C Maggs (Vice-Chairman Independent Member)

Cllrs: L Birt
N Warren
P Williams

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

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

Apologies for Absence: Cllr R W Johnstone

Mr K Frazer
Mr B Saunders

Officers in Attendance: Mr J Atkinson Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Mrs M Clampitt Committee Services Officer

STD/11/9 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 23 September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

STD/11/10 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

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

None.

STD/11/11 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/11/12 Update on Current Standards Matters

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer which advised Members of the latest position relating to Assessments, Reviews and Hearings.

The Committee and Officers were thanked for their time and consideration of the cases to date. The Monitoring Officer provided additional information about several cases which had not been available at the time the agenda was printed.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee about a recent hearing which had resulted in a technical breach by the Subject Member but no sanction applied as legal advice had been sought. The Monitoring Officer advised that he would be issuing guidance to all Members of the Council advising that should the Town or Parish Council, to which they were a member, submit a Planning Application then the Member would need to declare a personal interest and withdraw during the debate. The Member would be allowed to speak at the public participation part of the meeting.

RESOLVED

that the Update on Current Standards Matters report be noted.

STD/11/13 Members Code of Conduct Audit

The Committee received and considered a report which provided the results of the Members' Code of Conduct Internal Audit 2011/12.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the internal audit report had not raised any concerns over the processes in place for dealing with Members' Code of Conduct issues.

It was noted that the report would be considered by the Audit Committee at a future meeting.

RESOLVED

that the Members' Code of Conduct Internal Audit Report be noted.

STD/11/14 **Future Arrangements for Standards Committee**

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that there was to be a third reading of the Localism Bill on Monday 31 October 2011. The Committee felt that it would be premature to discuss possible ways forward until the third reading had occurred.

The Vice-Chairman (Elected Member) had spoken to the Leader of the Council and it was possible that some committee could be amalgamated. The Monitoring Officer provided an alternative which would be considered at the next Constitution Advisory Group (CAG) in December through the amalgamation of Audit, General Purposes, CAG and Standards. These Committees would form a governance committee.

The Committee agreed to defer in depth discussion until the 6 January meeting however it was felt that for public confidence and to help prevent mistakes by Councils that independent people had to be involved in the process.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 10.05 a.m..)

Chairman

Dated