

Central Bedfordshire  
Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Chicksands,  
Shefford SG17 5TQ



**please ask for** Martha Clampitt  
**direct line** 0300 300 4032  
**date** 15 September 2011

## NOTICE OF MEETING

### STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date & Time

**Friday, 23 September 2011 9.30 a.m.**

Venue at

**Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford**

Richard Carr  
**Chief Executive**

To: The Chairman and Members of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE :-

Councillors: Mrs J G Lawrence(Vice-Chairman), L Birt,  
R W Johnstone, N Warren and P Williams,  
Independent Mr K Ford(Chairman), Mr J Dann, Mr K Frazer,  
Persons: Mr M Jones and Miss D C Maggs  
Town and Parish Mr B Collier, Dr W J Eilbeck, Mr J Lewis and  
Representatives: Mr B Saunders

Other Members of the Council – as requested.

All other Members of the Council - on request

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS  
MEETING**

## AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and notification of substitute members.

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 10 June 2011.

(previously circulated)

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations and the nature in relation to:-

(a) personal interests in any agenda item

(b) personal and prejudicial interests in any agenda item

4. **Public Participation**

To deal with general questions and statements from members of the public in accordance with the scheme of public participation set out in Annex 1 to Part A4 of the Constitution.

## REPORTS

<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page Nos.</b>
5.	<b>Notifications of Gifts and Hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Members</b>	* 11 - 14
	To update the Committee on gifts and hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Council's Members from June to August 2011.	
6.	<b>Update on Current Standard Matters</b>	* 15 - 20
	To advise Members on the latest position relating to Assessment, Reviews and Hearings.	
7.	<b>The Localism Bill - Verbal Update</b>	

8. **Future Arrangements for the Standards Committee** \*

To discuss suggestions for the reconfiguration of the Standards Committee after the Localism Bill comes into force.

9. **Date of Next Meeting** \*

**Following the conclusion of the meeting there will be a training discussion for the new members of the Committee on the local determination of complaints. This will be based on the review of a number of case studies.**

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**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Friday, 10 June 2011

**PRESENT**

Mr K Ford (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs J Lawrence (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs: L Birt  
Mrs J G Lawrence  
N Warren  
P Williams

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

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

Apologies for Absence: Cllr R W Johnstone

Ms J Hughes  
Mr M Jones  
Miss D C Maggs  
Mr B Saunders

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

**STD/11/25 Monitoring Officer Announcement**

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that Mrs Julie Hughes, Town and Parish Representative, had written to resign her membership on the Standards Committee due to a change in her work.

The Committee thanked Mrs Hughes for her time and input during her two year appointment.

**STD/11/26 Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2011/12**

The Committee were invited to make nominations for Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2011/12.

Mr Keith Ford was the only candidate nominated and seconded. He was therefore appointed Chairman for 2011/12.

**RESOLVED**

**that Keith Ford be elected as Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2011/12.**

**STD/11/27 Appointment of Independent Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2011/12**

The Chairman of the Standards Committee invited nominations for the Vice-Chairman (Independent Member) of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2011/12.

Miss Deborah Maggs was the only candidate nominated and seconded. She was therefore appointed Vice-Chairman (Independent Member) for the Municipal Year 2011/12.

**RESOLVED**

**that Deborah Maggs be elected as Vice-Chairman (Independent Member) of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2011/12.**

**STD/11/28 Appointment of Elected Member Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2011/12**

The Chairman of the Standards Committee invited nominations for the Vice-Chairman (Elected Member) of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2011/12.

Cllr Mrs Jane Lawrence was the only candidate nominated and seconded. She was therefore appointed Vice-Chairman (Elected Member) for the Municipal Year 2011/12.

**RESOLVED**

**that Cllr Mrs Jane Lawrence be elected as Vice-Chairman (Elected Member) of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2011/12.**

**STD/11/29 Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

**that the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 21 January 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

STD/11/30 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

There were no declarations made.

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

There were no declarations made.

STD/11/31 **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/11/32 **Election of Members to Central Bedfordshire Council**

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that Central Bedfordshire Council had held an election on 5 May 2011, at which time the membership of the Council had reduced from 66 members to 59 members. The membership of the Council comprised of 49 Conservatives, 5 Liberal Democrats, 4 Independents and 1 Labour.

The Committee noted that all of the Declarations of Office had been signed and 54 out of the 59 Councillors had returned their Register of Interest forms. It was expected that the remaining 5 forms would be received by the end of June.

STD/11/33 **Update on Current Standard Matters**

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

The Monitoring Officer provided the new members of the Standards Committee with an overview of the Assessment process as follows:-

- A complaint is received by the Monitoring Officer
- A Standards Committee (Initial Assessment) is arranged with 3 members of the full Standards Committee to determine if a potential breach has occurred.
- The options available to the Assessment panel are: -
  - no potential breach of the code of conduct,
  - send the complaint to the Monitoring Officer for investigation as a potential breach has been found,
  - other action which normally required the Monitoring Officer's involvement,
  - in certain limited circumstances, the complaint can be referred to Standards for England – this is possible when the potential breach is very serious or the Member is too high ranking for the matter to be dealt with locally.

The Committee considered the new spreadsheet which would provide information on the cases being considered. It was agreed that the new layout was clearer and more accurate than the older version.

The Committee noted that this process was only to be in place until the end of this year at which point the Localism Bill will be in place. The Committee expressed the need for some process to remain. It was noted that work was beginning to consider possible options.

It was suggested that the next meeting contain an item where the Committee could discuss possible options. It was understood that any changes would impact the budget for the department in 2012/13 and would also require changes to the Constitution.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the update on current standards matters report be noted.**
- 2. that an item be included in the next Standards Committee agenda to consider options for the future of the Standards Committee.**

STD/11/34

#### **Notifications of Gifts and Hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Members**

The Committee received the report of the Monitoring Officer which provided an update on gifts and hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Members since the last meeting.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that a reminder had been sent to all Members through the Members Information Bulletin about the requirement to declare all gifts and hospitality over £25.

It was agreed that Members should err on the side of caution when considering declaring anything. It was the Committee's opinion that it is better to declare something even if the value is found to be less than £25.

The Monitoring Officer also informed the Committee that the Bribery Act was to come into force on 1 July 2011, which requires organisations to review their gifts and hospitality policies to ensure they are in keeping with the Act. In this regard, Members need to consider if they are invited to accept hospitality from a company whether bribery could be a factor.

#### **RESOLVED**

**that the declarations of gifts and hospitality received by Central Bedfordshire Members as set out in Appendix "A" to the report of the Monitoring Officer be noted.**



**STD/11/35 The Localism Bill - Verbal Update**

The Monitoring Officer provided an update on the progress of the Localism Bill through Parliament. When enacted, the Localism Act will remove the current framework. Local Authorities would still be required to promote high standards of conduct. Local Authorities including Town and Parish Councils would have discretion to adopt a code of conduct and could arrange their own procedures for dealing with complaints but would be under no obligation to do so.

Currently the Council supervises standards in the Town and Parish Councils but that would cease under the Bill. It was noted that the Chairman of the Standards Committee had written to the Head of Standards for England regarding the proposed changes.

Members of Local Authorities would still be required to complete a register of interest form and failure to do so would be a criminal offence.

The Committee noted that the Bill is likely to receive the Royal assent in November 2011. The current framework would continue for 2 – 3 months to allow transitional arrangements.

The Committee has agreed to email the Chairman with suggestions for ways the Standards Committee could be reconfigured to continue after the Bill comes into force. These ideas will be brought to the next meeting for consideration.

The Monitoring Officer agreed that following the Chief Legal Officers Summit to be held on 5 July, he would email the Committee with any updates relating to the Localism Bill.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. that the current progress of the Localism Bill be noted.**
- 2. that the Committee forward the Chairman suggestions of ways the Standards Committee could be reconfigured to continue to promote high standards of ethical conduct in the future.**

**STD/11/36 Training**

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that arrangements were being made to hold Code of Conduct training for all Members of the Council. There would also be training for new members of the Committee which could be run in house using the expertise held in the legal department.

STD/11/37 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Standards Committee is scheduled for 19 August 2011. Apologies have been received from Mr K Ford, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence and John Atkinson all of whom will not be available on the day.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 10.40 a.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....

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**Meeting:** Standards Committee  
**Date:** 23 September 2011  
**Subject:** Notifications of Gifts and Hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Members  
**Report of:** Monitoring Officer  
**Summary:** To update the Committee on gifts and hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Councils Members from June to August 2011.

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**Contact Officer:** John Atkinson – Monitoring Officer/Head of Democratic & Legal Services  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Non-executive  
**Reason for urgency (if appropriate)** N/A

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That the Committee notes the declarations of gifts and hospitality received by Central Bedfordshire Members as set out at Appendix “A” to this report.**

1. Attached at Appendix “A” to this report Members will find a summary of gifts and hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Council Members since the Committee’s last meeting.
2. Members are aware that their declarations are held in the public domain and their interests declarations are a requirement of the Code of Conduct.

**CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Council Priorities:**

Contributes to all Council priorities to ensure good governance

**Financial:**

N/A

**Legal:**

To ensure declarations are made in accordance with the Code of Conduct are maintained and disclosed in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

**Risk Management:**

N/A

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

N/A

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

None

**Community Development/Safety:**

N/A

**Sustainability:**

N/A

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Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

Appendix "A"

**Declarations notified to the Monitoring Officer  
in respect of Gifts and Hospitality received by  
Central Bedfordshire Members**

Date of gift or hospitality	Description of gift/ hospitality	Date notified to Monitoring Officer
14 June 2011	Gazely Ltd – Lunch	08/07/11
16 June 2011	ZSL Whipsnade Zoo 80 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Reception	Various dates as declared by <b>24</b> Councillors
21 June 2011	Commandant of Disc, Chicksands – Garden Party	25/06/11
21 June 2011	Commandant of Disc, Chicksands – Garden Party	01/07/11
22 June 2011	BT – Royal College of Defence Studies Dinner	25/06/11
23 June 2011	MJ Annual Awards Event	25/06/11
28 June 2011	Deloitte – Dinner @ LGA Conference	09/09/11
29 June 2011	BT – Dinner & reception @ LGA Conference	09/09/11
29 June 2011	BT – Dinner & reception @ LGA Conference	01/07/11
29 June 2011	BT – Dinner & reception @ LGA Conference	01/07/11
13 July 2011	Leadership Centre for Local Government – Leeds Castle Alumni Dinner	04/08/11

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**Meeting:** Standards Committee  
**Date:** 23 September 2011  
**Subject:** Update on Current Standard Matters  
**Report of:** Monitoring Officer  
**Summary:** To advise Members on the latest position relating Assessment, Reviews and Hearings

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**Contact Officer:** John Atkinson, Monitoring/Head of Democratic & Legal Services  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Non-executive  
**Reason for urgency (if appropriate)** N/A

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Committee receive and note the report.**

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1. The report set out at Appendix "A" shows the current position relating to code of conduct cases, together with information about any further complaints received by the Standards Committee.
2. Members are requested to receive and note this report.
3. At Appendix "B" a table setting out the numbers of matters dealt with by individual Members is attached for information.

**CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Council Priorities:**

Contributes to all Council priorities to ensure good governance

**Financial:**

N/A

**Legal:**

To ensure high ethical conduct within the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Ethical Framework as set out in the Local Government Act 2000

**Risk Management:**

N/A

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

N/A

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

None

**Community Development/Safety:**

N/A

**Sustainability:**

N/A

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Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands







**List of Members undertaking Sub-Committee (Initial Assessments), Reviews and Pre-Hearings and Hearings**

		<b>Initial Assessments</b>	<b>Reviews</b>	<b>Pre-Hearing</b>	<b>Hearing</b>
<b>Independent Member</b>	Mr K Ford	18	3	1	1
	Miss D Maggs	11	2	1	2
	Mr J Dann	9	1		
	Mr K Frazer	2	1	4	4
	Mr M Jones	9	2	1	2 + *
<b>Elected Member</b>	P Rawcliffe	10			2
	Mrs J G Lawrence	11	3	1	3
	A A J Rogers	12	2	4	3
	J Street	3	2	2	2*
	G Summerfield	2			
	R Johnstone	4			
	P Williams				1
	N Warren		1		
	L Birt	1		1	
<b>Town/Parish Member</b>	Mr B Collier	11	1	1	1
	Dr W J Eilbeck	22	4	6	6 + *
	Ms J Hughes	3	1		1*
	Mr J Lewis apart from	8 (2 cases as an elected member for Shadow Council)		1	1
	Mr B Saunders	1	1	2	1 (observer) + 1

\* Hearing could have occurred but not required as Investigator's report accepted. No Action.  
**as at 6 January 2011**

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