

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Friday, 14 May 2010

PRESENT

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

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

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

Parish Representatives: Dr W J Eilbeck
Mr J Lewis

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mr B Collier
Ms J Hughes
Mr B Saunders

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

STD/10/1 **Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2010/11**

The Monitoring Officer invited nominations for Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

Mr Keith Ford was the only candidate nominated and seconded. He was therefore appointed Chairman for 2010/11.

RESOLVED

that Keith Ford be elected as Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

STD/10/2 **Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2010/11.**

The Chairman of the Standards Committee invited nominations for the Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

It was noted that there were two Vice-Chairmen, one was the elected Member, who was appointed by Full Council on 22 April 2010, Cllr Peter Rawcliffe and one would be an Independent Member.

Miss D C Maggs was duly elected as the Independent Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

that Miss D C Maggs be elected as Vice-Chairman (Independent Member) of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

STD/10/3 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 26 February 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

STD/10/4 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

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

None.

STD/10/5 **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/10/6 **Petitions**

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

STD/10/7 **Annual Report in respect of Governance Issues for the Municipal Year 2009/10**

The Committee received and considered the annual report of the Monitoring Officer which highlighted the activities during the 2009/10 Municipal Year.

The Monitoring Officer informed Members that Appendix "A" was a summary of the work carried out by Standards Committee in respect of Ethical and Corporate Governance. Members attention was drawn to the training delivered and the items considered by the Committee during the year.

It was also noted that there was a breakdown of all of the assessment, reviews and hearings carried out to date and those still being investigated.

The Committee also considered the workplan for the 2010/11 Municipal Year, which highlighted that there would be further training on the Code of Conduct should changes be made. It was noted that the review of the Code had been delayed until after the General Election (6 May 2010). No further update was available to be given.

A discussion over the Committee members attending Town and Parish Council meetings resulted in a request that the Monitoring Officer write a letter to the BTPCA and inform them that members of the Standards Committee may attend various Town and Parish Council meetings during the next Municipal Year. It was noted that there were 70 Town and Parish Councils in Central Bedfordshire. The Committee were asked which members would be interested in attending Town and Parish Council meetings as part of Member Development and given the opportunity for Town and Parish Council feedback. The following were the members who were interested in taking part in the visits:-

Mr M Jones
Mr J H Lewis
Mr J Dann
Mr K Frazer
Dr J Eilbeck
Miss D C Maggs
Cllr J Lawrence
Mr K Ford

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer be noted and its contents endorsed.**
- 2. that the annual work plan as set out in Appendix "A" paragraph 6 of the report of the Monitoring Officer be agreed.**
- 3. that the Monitoring Officer contact the BTPCA and inform them that members of the Standards Committee may attend Town and Parish Council meetings during the Municipal Year 2010/11 as part of our own personal training and development process and to give an opportunity for feedback for Town and Parish Councils.**

STD/10/8

Bulletin No. 47

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

The Monitoring Officer highlighted the main points of interest within the bulletin as follows:-

- Adjudication Panel for England becomes known as First-tier Tribunal (Local Government Standards in England)
- Social networking: an effective medium of communication but not without risk
- Delay on the New Code of Conduct

The Committee discussed the importance of highlighting to Members and Town and Parish Council Members that social networking sites and forums are in the public domain. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Standards for England had provided a factsheet on this subject and she would arrange for it to be circulated to Members through their newsletter and a copy forwarded to Louise Ashmore at BTPCA for circulation to all Town and Parish Councils.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Standards for England Bulletin No. 47 be noted.**
- 2. that the Monitoring Officer send a copy of the Standards for England factsheet on sites to all Central Bedfordshire Council Members and to the BTPCA for circulation to all Town and Parish Councils.**

STD/10/9 **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 she would be sending a reminder via the Members' Newsletter drawing Members attention to their obligation to declare any gifts and hospitality received.

RESOLVED

1. ***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.***

2. ***that the Monitoring Officer send a reminder to all Central Bedfordshire Council Members of their obligation to declare any gifts and hospitality received.***

STD/10/10 **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 were thanked for their time and consideration of the cases to date.

RESOLVED

that the report of the Monitoring Officer be noted.

STD/10/11 **"A Place for Standards" - Standards for England Assembly 18-19 October 2010**

The Chairman asked the Committee to confirm the non renewal of the fee to the Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce) for the next Municipal Year. This was agreed by the Committee as it was viewed that the Organisation was not adding value as originally hoped.

In relation to the Standards for England Assembly to be held on 18 – 19 October 2010, the Committee agreed that in these difficult financial times it would be prudent to reduce the number of attendees to one officer, to be appointed by the Monitoring Officer nearer to the time of the Assembly.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Council does not renew membership of the Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce).**
- 2. that the Monitoring Officer appoint one officer to attend the Standards for England Assembly to be held on 18 – 19 October 2010 nearer the time at the appropriate time.**

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

Chairman

Dated