

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Friday, 23 September 2011

PRESENT

Mr K Ford (Chairman)
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 K Frazer
Miss D C Maggs

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

Apologies for Absence: Cllr R W Johnstone

Mr M Jones

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

STD/11/1 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 10 June 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

STD/11/2 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

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

None.

STD/11/3 **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/11/4 **Notifications of Gifts and Hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Members**

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

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/11/5 **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 of the cases which had not been available at the time the agenda was printed.

In one case, an investigation had been brought to a close after the subject member had resigned from office. The Chairman had agreed that no further action should be taken in respect of the complaint. The Committee discussed the course of action which should be taken should a similar situation arise in the future. The Committee concluded that the following action should be taken in such circumstances:-

A new sub-committee would be convened to review the original assessment information and any subsequent information raised during the investigation. The Sub-Committee would determine whether the investigation should be pursued or brought to close and the parties would be notified of this decision.

RESOLVED

that the Update on Current Standards Matters report be noted.

STD/11/6 The Localism Bill - Verbal Update

The Monitoring Officer provided an update on the progress of the Localism Bill through Parliament.

In particular the Committee received hard copies of the debate which was recently held in the House of Lords. It was noted that a number of points raised by the Committee in the letter sent by the Chairman to Government in February 2011 were addressed by the House of Lords during this debate.

It was also noted that the Government was reviewing its position on the arrangements proposed before the Bill received Royal Assent later in the autumn.

STD/11/7 Future Arrangements for the Standards Committee

The Chairman thanked members of the Committee for their suggestions on the future arrangements for the Standards Committee.

The Committee agreed that it was a positive sign from the Government that they were reviewing their position on the future of Standards within Local Government.

It was noted that Cllr Mrs Lawrence would represent the Committee in discussions on this matter with the Executive.

The Committee agreed that they had a good foundation for discussions once the future arrangements in the Bill were finalised. The Committee agreed to defer the detailed discussion until the next meeting on 28 October 2011 when it was felt more information would be available.

STD/11/8 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Standards Committee will be held on 28 October 2011 at 09.30 am.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 10.30 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated