

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON THURSDAY 20TH NOVEMBER, 2008**

Present:-
PRESENT: Councillors Brady and Storey
Independent Members Mr N Edwards (Chair), Mr E Davies (Vice-Chair)
and Mr J. Fraser
Parish Councillors Mrs B O'Brien and D Warren

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Booth (Substitute Member), Fairclough, M. Fearn, Hill, Papworth and D. Rimmer (Substitute Member).

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 October 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

17. ENFORCEMENT OF HIGH STANDARDS OF MEMBER CONDUCT

The Legal Director reported that the Assistant Chief Executive (Communications) had produced a draft local member protocol for dealing with queries from the media and circulated it to the three Group Leaders for consideration. It was intended that the draft protocol be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee for endorsement prior to its submission to the Council for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

**18. COMMUNITIES AND CONTROL: REAL PEOPLE, REAL POWER
- CODES OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS
AND EMPLOYEES - CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered the report of the Legal Director on a consultation paper issued under the Government White Paper 'Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power, by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which invited views on proposals to revise the current Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members. The Paper primarily sought views on how the Code should relate to Members Conduct when acting in their non-official capacity and proposals to change the general principles which govern the conduct of Local Authority Members.

The report set out draft responses to the specific questions set out in the Consultation Paper, which would need to be submitted to the DCLG by the closing date of 24 December 2008 and the Committee discussed the content of the proposed response to the Consultation Paper.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the Consultation Paper be noted, and
- (2) the Legal Director be authorised to submit the response set out to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

**19. SEVENTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS
COMMITTEES**

The Legal Director reported on her attendance at the seventh Annual Assembly of Standards Committees held at Birmingham on 13 to 14 October 2008 and indicated that the key issue discussed at the conference was the local ethical regime for the conduct of local Councillors.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

**20. MEMBERS' SELF-MANAGED WEBSITES - IMPLEMENTATION
AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

The Committee considered the report of the Legal Director which provided details of the proposals to provide Members of the Council with the facility to create and publish their own self-managed websites on the Council's website, via the 'Modern.gov' Committee Management System and sought approval to the implementation of an Acceptable User Policy for the use of the facility.

The report which had previously been considered by the Members ICT Steering Group, indicated that it was expected that only a small number of Members would use this facility based on the experiences of other Local

Authorities, but it would enable the Council to meet IEG Democratic Revenue Priority Outcome R6: 'Provide every Councillor with the option to have an easy to manage set of public web pages (for community leadership purposes) that is either maintained by them or that they can maintain themselves'.

The responsibility for the content of the website would lie with the individual Member and any breach of the Acceptable User Policy could be reported to the Standards Committee. The Members' ICT Support Officer would provide training to Members on the production of their web pages, following the agreement of the Member to operate their website in accordance with the policy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the draft Acceptable User Policy be endorsed and submitted to the Council for approval.