

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON 28 MAY 2009**

PRESENT: Mr. N. Edwards (in the Chair)
Mr. E. Davies (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Bigley, Brady, Fairclough, M. Fearn, Hill,
Papworth, Mr. J. Fraser, Mrs. B. O'Brien and
Mr. D. Warren

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 January 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. DEFERRED ISSUES

Further to Minute No's 24 and 25 of the meeting held on 22 January 2009, the Legal Director submitted a report which indicated that the Assistant Chief Executive (Communications) was still in discussion in relation to the draft Member/Officer Medial Protocol and that a report thereon would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

The report also indicated that the three political groups had not yet formally considered and provided feedback on the Members' Travel and Subsistence Scheme and consequently a report had not been submitted to the Independent Remuneration Panel for consideration. The Legal Director indicated that as soon as the comments of the Groups were received, the matter would be referred to the Remuneration Panel and it may be necessary to convene an additional meeting of the Committee to receive the recommendations of the Panel prior to their submission to the Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Assistant Chief Executive (Communications) be requested to submit a final draft of the protocol to the next meeting of the Committee in view of the longstanding nature of this issue; and
- (3) the Chair and the Legal Director discuss the possibility of convening an additional meeting of the Committee if necessary.

5. ANNUAL RETURN - STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND

The Legal Director submitted a report on the Annual Return for 2008/09 submitted to the Standards Board for England in relation to the following issues:

- Role of the Standards Committee
- Annual Report of the Standards Committee
- What the Standards Committee does to promote standards
- Training
- Leadership
- Complaints
- Member/Officer Relations
- Registering Interests
- Officer Conduct

The report indicated that the Standards Board intends to use the information collected in the Annual Return to drive up performance, to champion the work of individual Standards Committees and to ensure the Board has an effective overview of local standards frameworks in England. The Board will be sharing the information with the Audit Commission to enable them to use the Annual Return information to form the basis of their assessment of Local Authorities under the use of resources key lines of enquiry in the new comprehensive area assessment.

The Committee discussed the content of the various sections of the Annual Return in detail.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Legal Director produce a Forward Work Plan for the Committee including any training sessions to be organised, for consideration at its next meeting;
- (2) the Legal Director produce an Annual Report on the work of the Committee and submit the draft report for 2008/09 to the next meeting for consideration;

- (3) the Independent Chair present the Annual Report to a future meeting of the Council;
- (4) the Committee meet with the Chief Executive on an annual basis to discuss ethical issues and the content of the Annual Report on the work of the Committee in the last twelve months;
- (5) the Legal Director seek the views of the Standards Board of England on examples of best practice of local authorities monitoring and ensuring high standards of behaviour when the Authority is working in partnership with other organisations; and
- (6) the Legal Director submit a report to the next meeting on the possibility of using the toolkit developed by the Standards Board for England, the Improvement and Development Agency and the Audit Commission for assessing ethical governance arrangements in the Council.

6. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Legal Director reported on the programme for the Eighth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees to be held at Birmingham on 12 to 13 October 2009. The Legal Director indicated that she would be attending the Annual Assembly and invited nominations from members of the Committee to attend the Assembly.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Chair and Parish Councillor O'Brien be authorised to attend the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees.