

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 11th December 2008

Mr. J.R. Baggaley (Chairman)

Councillors:	P.G. Barnes	F.J.D. Boot
	C.N.F.W. Pratt	Mr G. T. Parkinson
	Mr. G.D Proctor (a)	Mr. G Wallis

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Mr Proctor.

18 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2008.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

19 CONSULTATION ON REVISION OF CODE OF CONDUCT

The Head of Democratic and Community Services sought views of the Committee on the Consultation Papers issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The DCLG had issued a consultation paper seeking news on proposals to amend the Members Code of Conduct. The consultation paper was submitted at Appendix 1 to the report.

It was recommended that members of the committee consider the 12 consultation questions set out in the paper relating to the Members Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED:

That the following response be made to the consultation paper: -

Question 1

Yes

Question 2

No. Fixed penalties are available for offences which may be deemed serious and capable of bringing the office into disrepute (such as dishonesty)

It should include cautions and fixed penalties except where relating to minor

offence/trivial matters and motoring offences not involving disqualification.

Question 3

Yes

Question 4

The Code should apply where a Member is convicted abroad whether or not it would have been a criminal offence if committed in the UK.

Question 5

Yes

Question 6

Yes

We suggest that consideration is given to increasing the value of the gift and hospitality to be registered to take into account inflation.

If a Member is suspended, clarification is also needed as to whether they are still subject to the Code during the suspension period.

Question 7

No

Question 8

No

Question 9

Yes. Although we suggest that ceasing to be a Member is a draconian step and instead the Member should be prohibited from acting as a Member.

Question 10

No. Does not add anything to the existing principles

(Mr Wallis left the meeting during consideration of the above question)

Question 11

No. Should be consistent with Code of Conduct definition - see question 2

Question 12

In line with response to question 3.

Questions 13 to 22

Personnel and Resources Committee have considered the report on Model Code of Practice for employees and will respond to the consultation.

20 SEVENTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Mr J R Baggaley the Standards Committee Chairman submitted a report on the Seventh Annual Assembly held at Birmingham on 13/14 October 2008.

The event had been attended by Sue Sale, Monitoring Officer for the Council, and Mr John Baggaley, Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee over the course of the two-day event.

This year the Assembly title was "Delivering the Goods: local standards in action" and had been aimed at illustrating the operation of the devolved conduct regime and highlighting practical issues not only in the handling of complaints, but in the appreciation of the underlying philosophy of the regime, in particular its importance in the public perception of its local representatives.

A copy of the report was presented for the Committee's information.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

21 ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR ENGLAND - GUIDANCE

The Head of Democratic and Community Services reminded Members that the complaints procedure provided for a Standards Committee to have the ability to refer a matter to the Adjudication Panel if the Committee considered that its powers of sanction were insufficient. The reference could only be made if the Panel had agreed to accept it.

The Panel had now issued guidance as to the circumstances in which they would be prepared to accept such a reference.

A copy of the Guidance was submitted at Appendix 2.

RESOLVED:

To note the information.

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm