

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 8 June 2011

Present:

Dr Simon Davey (Chairman)
Mr Richard Allen (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Reg Adams, Councillor Peter Dean, Councillor
Peter Fookes, Mr Nicholas Marcar, Councillor Alexa
Michael, Councillor Gordon Norrie and Mr Jonathan Prince

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Dr Simon Davey was elected Chairman of the Committee, with Richard Allen serving as Vice-Chairman.

Dr Davey took the opportunity to welcome Councillors Reg Adams and Gordon Norrie as new members of the Committee.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2011 AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

5 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

There were none.

6 DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensations had been received.

7 REFERENCE FROM AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE: ANTI-FRAUD GOVERNANCE CHECKLIST

At its meeting on 19th January 2011, the Committee considered the Council's Code of Corporate Governance. During the discussion, the issue of use of Audit Commission anti-fraud checklists was raised. Following this, the Audit Sub-Committee on 16th March 2011 considered the fourteen general compliance questions set out in the checklist contained in the Audit Commission's publication "Protecting the public purse 2010" and was informed that all the questions were met in Bromley.

Mr Marcar expressed an interest in knowing more about the background to the affirmative answers (for example, what actually constituted a zero-tolerance approach in Bromley, and how awareness raising of money-laundering issues was targeted); the Committee were informed that Mark Gibson, the Assistant Director (Technical and Audit), was very happy to provide further background briefings to any members of the Standards Committee.

Mr Marcar was also interested in the steps the Audit Sub-Committee were taking to respond to the Bribery Act, and offered, in his work capacity, to run a briefing at some point if this would be useful; this offer would be passed on to Mark Gibson.

RESOLVED that the position regarding the use of the anti-fraud governance checklist by Audit Sub-Committee be noted.

8 MONITORING OFFICER'S GENERAL REPORT

The Committee received a report updating them on the progress of the Localism Bill. Bob Neill MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government was scheduled to attend a meeting of the Executive and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 15th June to discuss this further, and all members of the Council, including independent members of the Standards Committee, were invited to attend.

The Committee accepted that there was little to be gained by undertaking further discussion on future arrangements in Bromley to promote ethical governance and behaviour until the Localism Bill had passed into law and any statutory requirements and frameworks were clear. However, it supported the suggestion that once this was the case (currently expected to be during the autumn) a special seminar-style meeting of the Committee should be held, with a broader attendance by other councillors and senior officers, to discuss possible future approaches and structures to support these principles.

The Chairman and other independent members of the Committee had held discussions with the Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources) on the outcomes of a staff survey and potential follow-up actions.

RESOLVED that the Committee note

- (1) the current status of the Localism Bill, and the invitation to attend the Executive and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 15 June 2011; and**
- (2) the current position regarding follow-up on the last staff survey.**

9 ETHICAL INDICATORS

The Committee noted the information provided in the report.

10 STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS SUBSEQUENTLY AMENDED

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of confidential information.

12 COMPLAINTS (if any)

Since the last meeting of the Committee one filtering hearing had taken place; this related to a single complaint involving two councillors, and had resulted in a decision for no further action to be taken.

The Meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chairman