

MINUTES OF: MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 17th June 2008

**PRESENT: Mr A Neville (Chair)
Councillors Aldred, A. Barnes, Cheetham, Morris, J. Pilling and
Thorne (substitute for Sandiford)
Councillor Grogan, Whitworth Town Council
Mr A Nixon, Independent Member
Mr F B Divine, Independent Member**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Linda Fisher, Executive Director of Regulatory Services
Heather Moore, Committee and Member Services Manager**

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN 2008/2009

Resolved:

That Mr Andrew Neville be appointed as Chairman for 2008/2009.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2008/2009

Resolved:

That Mr Bernard Divine be appointed as Vice Chairman for 2008/2009.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Sandiford (Councillor Thorne substituting) and H. Steen and Councillor D. Barnes, Whitworth Town Council.

4. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair raised an item relating to the format and style of the meeting and it was agreed that he would follow up with the Monitoring Officer. It was indicated that a protocol for all meetings should be developed.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th March 2008 be agreed as a correct record.

7. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair reported on a discussion at the last meeting in respect of compliance with customer service standards on gulley cleaning matters. The Executive Director of Regulatory Services reported that she had set up an excel spreadsheet to log all Lancashire County Council matters. Members were asked to provide details of outstanding queries to Linda Fisher. Members discussed response time to queries

The Chair further reported that the response Group had met to feedback comments to the Standards Board in respect of the local assessments consultation.

Resolved:

That the Performance Scrutiny Committee be requested to continue to monitor response times to enquiries and complaints to ensure compliance with the Council's customer service standards.

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised under this item.

9. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair provided an update on two matters raised at the last meeting. Firstly, in respect of compliance with the Member Learning and Development Strategy it was reported that further work had been undertaken and only one member hadn't attended 5 sessions of training during 2007/2008. Comments were made in relation to start times of training and the Committee and Member Services Manager agreed to feedback to the Member Development Working Group.

The Chair reported that a copy of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy had been circulated for the Committee's information. No reports had been received under the Policy.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2008/2009. It was agreed that the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to review compliance with the Freedom of Information Retention and Destruction Policy as part of their work programme.

Resolved:

That subject to the amendment above, the Work Programme for 2008/2009 be agreed.

11. WEBSITE

The Chair reported that the Council's website had been updated in relation to Standards Committee matters. The new complaints process was included and a press release had been issued to raise awareness.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

12. MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' REGISTERS OF INTERESTS

The Chair reported that the Register of Interests had been updated following the recent Elections.

13. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Chair presented the report of the Executive Director of Regulatory Services which recommended the adoption of assessment criteria in relation to handling of complaints about breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Chair reported that there were no outstanding cases under the old scheme.

The Committee discussed the following matters when considering the report:

- Joint working with other Authorities to build capacity
- Cost of Hearings and publication of notices
- Publishing the criteria in a booklet format for members of the public

Resolved:

That the Assessment criteria and procedure be approved and adopted.

14. STANDARDS BOARD BULLETIN

A copy of the Standards Board Bulletin was circulated for the consideration of the Committee.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.00pm)

CHAIR