

City of Durham

At a Meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in the Town Hall, Durham, on Tuesday, 16th May, 2006, at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Mrs T. Naples (in the Chair)
and Councillor Moderate (City Council Member)
and Councillor C.W. Beswick (Parish Council Member)

Also Present: Councillor Colledge

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cummings, Gibbon, Simpson and Mr Ingleby.

26. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 14th March, 2006, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Report of Monitoring Officer

27. PARISH REPRESENTATIVE VACANCY

The Monitoring Officer had been in touch with the Executive Officer of the County Durham Association of Local Councils regarding the vacancy on the Standards Committee for one additional parish representative. The Executive Officer had advised the Monitoring Officer that he was currently trying to resurrect the Durham District Local Councils' Committee, who in the past had appointed representatives to the Standards Committee. He was having some difficulty in this regard however, and advised that he was having similar difficulties with resurrecting similar bodies in Wear Valley, Derwentside and Darlington.

The Executive Officer suggested that the process may well be extended. He was reporting upon progress to the next meeting of the Executive Committee which was scheduled to be held on 7th June, 2006, to seek their views and had promised that if anything happened in the interim, he would keep the Monitoring Officer advised.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

28. TRAINING EVENT – SEDGFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL 4TH APRIL 2006

A training event facilitated by Mr Peter Keith-Lucas of Bevan Britten Solicitors was held at Sedgfield Borough Council on 4th April, 2006, and four places had been reserved by the City Council for the Independent Members of the Standards Committee and Councillor Beswick, the Parish Representative.

Feedback from the event had been provided by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and their respective notes were circulated.

Councillor Beswick asked Members to note that he had been unable to attend the event because of ill health.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

**29. ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND
16TH/17TH OCTOBER 2006**

The Leader had authorised the attendance of the Vice-Chairman at this year's conference.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

30. TERMS OF REFERENCE

There would be a meeting of Full Council on 11th July, 2006.

Council at its meeting in November, 2005, considered the issue of terms of reference for the Standards Committee and determined that the terms of reference should remain unchanged with the intention of reviewing these at Annual Council in May 2007.

Under the City Council's Procedure Rules a motion of amendment in similar terms to one which had been rejected at a meeting of the Council in the past 6 months, could not be moved unless the notice of motion amendment was signed by a minimum of 25 members of the Council.

The 6 months time limit would expire in July and therefore, in accordance with the wishes of the Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer would be in a position to ask Council to reconsider their earlier decision in relation to extending the terms of reference of the Committee.

The previous request was to extend the terms of reference by making provision for the following:-

- (a) Monitoring and reviewing performance under the Council's corporate complaints procedure and monitoring investigations conducted by the Local Government Ombudsman
- (b) The overview of the Council's confidential reporting policy

Resolved: (i) That Council be requested to extend the terms of reference of the Standards Committee in line with the previous request.

(ii) That a City Council Member of the Standards Committee be requested to speak in support of the request at the Council Meeting.

31. LOCAL HEARINGS

ITEM DEFERRED

32. ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AUDIT

The Standards Committee carried out an Ethical Governance Audit in 2004, and it was decided at the time that the exercise would be repeated during 2006.

A report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee with proposals for the carrying out of the next audit.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

33. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The Monitoring Officer circulated the schedule of meetings for the present municipal year.

The timetable for meetings during 2007/2008 was currently being finalised and the Monitoring Officer would report upon the dates of meetings of the Standards Committee as soon as the schedule had been approved.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

34. BRANCEPETH PARISH COUNCIL

At the request of Brancepeth Parish Council, the Monitoring Officer was attending their meeting on 18th May, 2006, to speak about Ethical Governance matters and the Code of Conduct. The Clerk to Brancepeth Parish Council had indicated that representatives of other parishes may wish to attend and a general invitation had gone to all parishes.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

35. STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND – BULLETIN 28

A copy of the latest bulletin from the Standards Board for England was circulated for Members' information.

The meeting terminated at 6.10 p.m.

Chairman