

City of Durham

At a Meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in the Gala Theatre, Durham, on Tuesday, 20th March, 2007, at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Mr B.R.J. Ingleby (in the Chair)
and Councillors Moderate, and Simpson (City Council Members)
and Councillors J.S. Anderson and C.W. Beswick (Parish Council Members)
and Mr D. Hollingworth and Mrs T. Naples (Independent Members).

546. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gibbon and McDonnell.

547. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 16th January, 2007, 19th February, 2007, and 28th February, 2007, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject only to an amendment to the Minutes of the Meeting on 19th February, 2007, recording the tendered apologies of Mrs. Naples.

Report of Monitoring Officer

548. REVISED MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS

At the Extraordinary Meeting of the Standards Committee held on 28th February, 2007, discussions had taken place on the Consultation Paper, with reference to the revised Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer had responded to the Department for Communities and Local Government, and a copy of her response was circulated for Members' information.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

549. ROADSHOW 2007

The Standards Board for England was arranging its 2007 roadshow which would be held in various locations across the country. The Council had been invited to send four delegates to the Newcastle-upon-Tyne venue. This roadshow would be held on 12th June, 2007. Places had been reserved and a final decision on attendees could be taken after Annual Council on 23rd May, 2007, when the appointments to next years Standards Committee were made.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

550. ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AUDIT 2006

The response to last years Ethical Governance Audit was somewhat disappointing. Sixteen replies were received from City Council Members, twenty from staff, and three from parish councils, making a total response of 39 out of 205 questionnaires dispatched. The responses were forwarded to Alan Lawton, formerly of Teesside University, and now working for Inlogov at Birmingham University. He had kindly agreed to carry out a validation exercise, and his comments on the Audit were circulated.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That governance training be arranged for Members, as part of the induction process following the Election, and for Senior Officers.

551. BMG RESEARCH

The Standards Board for England had commissioned BMG Research to carry out research in relation to satisfaction with advice and guidance. Questionnaires were forwarded respectively to the Monitoring Officer, the Chair of the Standards Committee and the two other independent members of the Standards Committee. In addition, there were three further copies of the questionnaire for non-Standards Committee Members i.e. one Cabinet Members and two Scrutiny Members. The closing date for submissions of the returns was 2nd March, 2007.

Responses would not be linked to individual members or authorities. The intention of the questionnaire was solely for the purpose of enabling analysis and comment on any geographical spread and difference in response rates.

When the outcome of the research was known, the findings would be reported to the Standards Committee.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

552. STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND – BULLETIN 32

Copies of the latest bulletin from the Standards Board for England were circulated for Members' information.

Members noted that this year's Annual Assembly was to take place on the 15th/16th October, 2007, at the ICC Birmingham.

Resolved: That the City Council should be requested to authorise the attendance of one Member of the Standards Committee at the event.

The meeting terminated at 6.05 p.m.

Chairman