

City of Durham

At a Special Meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in Conference Room A, Dragonville Offices, Durham on Wednesday, 2nd January, 2008, at 9.30 a.m.

Present: Mr B.R.J. Ingleby (in the Chair)
and Councillors Holland, Moderate and Simpson (City Council Members)
and Councillor J.S. Anderson and Mrs P. R. Hudson (Parish Council Members)
and Mrs T. Naples (Independent Member).

432. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Thompson and Mr Hollingworth.

424. REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER

The Monitoring Officer presented a comprehensive report in respect of the obligations and options which would be added to the remit of the Standards Committee from 1st April, 2008. Although the regulations governing the local assessment filter had yet to be published, it was necessary to take some initial decisions as to how the filter would work in practice.

Resolved: (i) That the local assessment filter be applied through a process to be known as the Local Assessment Procedure (LAP)

(ii) The LAP for complaints about Standards in Public Life should be publicised as widely as possible and the Monitoring Officer and Chair of Standards Committee shall meet with the Council's PR section to discuss a publicity strategy.

(iii) The Chair and Vice Chair will, where possible, attend parish council meetings with the Monitoring Officer to provide training to parish councils on the LAP and standards in public life in generally.

(iv) In the LAP, the Monitoring Officer shall be the first point of contact and appropriate publicity and briefings shall be undertaken to ensure that employees, Members and the public are aware that complaints about councillors should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at first instance.

(v) The committee will, from April, need to meet on a monthly basis. It is proposed that this meeting take place at 5.30 pm on a Thursday, dates to be advised.

(vi) It was also proposed that the committee should set aside one day each month for the hearing of complaints. This was to be the first Wednesday of each month at 9.30 a.m., commencing from March and preferably being held in the Mayor's Chamber.

(vii) The committee shall produce an annual report. The initial draft shall be considered at the March meeting.

(viii) The committee decided to make no further investigations in respect of joint working until such time as the volume of business produced by the LAP is known.

(ix) Feedback and review of the implementation of the LAP would be required and it may be desirable to undertake an audit of the procedure once it has been in place for a number of months.

Meeting terminated at 11.10 a.m.

Chair