

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
7 July 2005

Time: 1.00 p.m.

Present: L. Petterson (Chairman) and

Councillors A. Gray, Mrs. L. Hovvels and J. Wayman J.P.

Spennymoor Town Council

Councillor J. Marr

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. B. Graham and G.M.R. Howe
Mr. I. Jamieson ((Independent Member)

ST.1/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no interests to declare.

ST.2/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th April 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Specific reference was made to Minute. No. ST.29/04 – Review of standards arrangements – staffing support for the Council’s Monitoring Officer: changes to Standards Committee: changes to Constitution – it was explained that the report had been considered by Full Council at its meeting on 29th June 2005 and had been agreed.

The Principal Assistant Solicitor was then introduced to the Committee as the newly appointed Deputy Monitoring Officer.

ST.3/05 STANDARDS TRAINING UPDATE

29th June, 2005 : Shildon Town Council

The Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer explained that the training had been postponed and would be re-arranged for later in the year.

5th and 6th September, 2005 :

Fourth Annual Assembly of Standards Board

It was explained that the Solicitor to the Council and the Leader of the Council would be attending the event and would report back to the Committee.

Discussions were held regarding how Town and Parish Clerks were informed of training events and how their needs were identified. It was

suggested that they should be approached individually by the Deputy Monitoring Officer, in order to identify their training needs.

ST.4/05 REPORT ON STANDARDS BOARD ROADSHOW 2005 : NEWCASTLE : 26TH MAY 2005

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer detailing the event held by the Standards Board, which was attended by Standards Committee Members. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the purpose of the event was to review the Council's Code of Conduct, highlighting any key issues regarding local investigations and hearings.

Consideration was given to the discussions held at the event regarding the role of the Standards Committee. It was suggested that its role should be extended to enable each authority to assess complaints and allegations at a local level and that communications between Town and Parish Councillors needed to be improved.

The problems in authorities deciding which allegations they would investigate were also pointed out with specific reference being made to the public's perception if allegations were held locally. It was therefore suggested that the client be given the decision as to where they would prefer the case to be heard. It was explained that the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer would continue to monitor the suggestions made at the event and would continue to update the Committee.

RECOMMENDED: That the report be agreed.

ST.5/05 DISCUSSION PAPER : CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer detailing proposals for the provision of Members engagement during the review of the Constitution. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Reference was made to the fact there would be times during a review of the constitution where Members would feel that they should be involved in process. The report therefore detailed a mechanism, which would provide an opportunity within the working arrangements between Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be involved in proposing changes to the Constitution.

RECOMMENDED: 1. That Standards Committee agrees the report.

2. That the report be submitted to each Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

ST.6/05

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

3rd November, 2005 at 1.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Spennymoor.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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