

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
3 November 2005

Time: 1.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor J. Wayman (Chairman) and
Councillors Mrs. B. Graham, A. Gray and Mrs. L. Hovvels

Independent Member

Mr. I. Jamieson

Apologies: Councillor G.M.R. Howe, L. Petterson and
Councillor J. Marr (Spennymoor Town Council)

ST.7/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no interests to declare.

ST.8/05 MINUTES

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

Specific reference was made to Minute No: ST.5/05 – Discussion Paper: Constitutional Review of Member Involvement – it was explained that the report had been considered by all three Overview and Scrutiny Committees and also by Cabinet, where it had been agreed.

ST.9/05 STANDARDS TRAINING UPDATE

Members were informed that consultation would be taking place between the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer and the Town and Parish Councils regarding their training needs. A programme of training would be produced and finalised for early next year.

Members were reminded that any training needs or areas where support was required should be identified through the Member Development Programme.

Detailed consideration was given to the procedures followed by Durham Constabulary when dealing with licensing applications, specifically when objecting. The Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer informed Members that a meeting had taken place between the Chief Executive Officer and Durham Constabulary to address the issue.

ST.10/05

SUMMARY OF STANDARDS BOARD CONFERENCE: BIRMINGHAM 2005

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, which detailed the principal messages taken from the Fourth Assembly of Standards Committees held on 5th and 6th September 2005 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Members were informed of the Standards Board recommendations regarding the review of the Code of Conduct to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), together with the keynote messages of the presentation, which were delivered by David Prince, Chief Executive of the Standards Board. Reference was made to:

- The progress made since the previous years conference
- The development of the Ethical Governance Toolkit
- The CPA Key Lines of Enquiry
- The Graham Committee and the ODPM Select Committee

With regard to the key lines of enquiry for the forthcoming CPA it was explained that there would be much more focus on the links between good performance and the ethical agenda. It was pointed out that those Authorities who received an excellent outcome in performance were usually ethically sound.

Detailed discussion was raised regarding the possible increase of independent members. Members of the Standards Committee pointed out that the increase would be beneficial in providing a balance in considering local issues.

It was also questioned, in relation to training whether a mock trial hearing could be arranged for Members to become familiar with proceedings. I. Jamieson reported that he had attended such a training event at Durham County Council and had found it to be a valuable experience. It was agreed the suggestion would be examined.

RECOMMENDED: That the report be agreed.

ST.11/05

ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive Officer regarding the need to regularly review the Constitution. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Detailed consideration was given to the immediate changes that were recommended to be made to the Constitution following advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer and meetings of the Constitution Review Group.

AGREED: That Council be recommended to approve the amendments set out in the Appendix and direct the Council's Monitoring Officer to: -

a. amend the Constitution accordingly and make all necessary and consequential amendments.

b. publish and amend the version on the Council's website.

ST.12/05

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9th February 2006 at 1.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Spennymoor.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss. S. Billingham, Spennymoor 816166, Ext 4240, sbillingham@sidgefield.gov.uk