

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
5 July 2007

Time: 1.00 p.m.

Present: L. Petterson (Chairman) and

Councillors A. Gray, T. Hogan, Mrs. L. Hovvells and Mrs. E. Maddison

Parish/Town Council member

Councillor J. Marr

Independent Member

Mr. I. Jamieson

Apologies: Councillor J. Wayman J.P

ST.1/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th April, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ST.2/07 COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE: ANNUAL REPORT 2006

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer providing a summary of the Annual Report 2006, which was published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were reminded of the background of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, which was established in 1994.

An overview of the activities during 2006 were outlined in the report together with a number of standards issues including the Inquiry process, the Tenth Report, the Operation of the Ministerial Code, the New Civil Service Code, the System of Allowances and Expenses for Members of Parliament, Loans for Peerages, Electoral Fraud and Electoral Registration.

Members of the Committee welcomed the report, however, specific reference was made to 3.21 regarding Electoral Registration and eligible voters. It was questioned whether statistics regarding voters, eligible and non eligible could be made available for Sedgefield Borough. It was agreed that the queries would be taken back to the relevant officer in Electoral Registration Section.

AGREED : That the report be noted.

ST.3/07**STANDARDS COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN 2007/2008**

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer outlining a number of areas that were to be considered at future Standards Committees. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Member's attention was drawn to Appendix 1, which outlined the forthcoming meetings and the items, which would be considered and how they related to the Standards remit. It was pointed out that there would be greater emphasis on guidance on the filtering of complaints at a local level. It was felt that there were a number of complaints that could be dealt with at a local level rather than by the Standards Board, unless further investigation was required.

Detailed discussion was held regarding the Constitution and when it would be published. It was explained that the Constitution was available on the website and updated regularly. A paper copy would not be published until after Council in July, 2007 as a number of changes were to be proposed.

Consideration was given to the format of the published Constitution where it was agreed that the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer would send a letter to all Members requesting their preferred format.

AGREED : That the report be noted.

ST.4/07**TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEMBERS: 2007**

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer outlining the training arrangements for Members throughout 2007. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were reminded that it was mandatory to attend at least one qualifying training event during the year.

The Committee was reminded of a number of training events that had taken place to date, including the Post Election Member Induction on Standards and Ethics on 10th May, 2007, Standards Board Roadshow – 12th June, 2007 and a training session which was facilitated by Peter Keith-Lucas of Bevan Brittan Solicitors which took place on 27th June, 2007.

A number of training sessions would be delivered to both Town and Parish Councillors and Borough Councillors, in the Autumn of 2007, by the Council's Monitoring Officer, which would be open meetings. There would also be a number of training sessions specifically for Borough Members including a screening of the Standards Board's Videos/DVDs and a presentation on Regulatory Committees later in the year.

AGREED : That the report and future training events be noted.

ST.5/07**STANDARDS BOARD ROADSHOW, 12TH JUNE 2007, NEWCASTLE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer summarising the above event attended by Standards

Committee Members held by the Standards Board on 12th June, 2007.
(For copy see file of Minutes).

The report outlined a number of views that were expressed during the training session including those on the revised Code of Conduct, Bias and Predetermination and Challenges faced during 2008.

AGREED : That the report and the views expressed therein be noted.

ST.6/07

ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION PART I

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive, which detailed the need to continually review the Constitution to ensure that it reflected existing law and its operation continued to provide an efficient and effective framework on the delivery of the Council's Aims and Objectives.
(For copy see file of Minutes).

The report outlined the revised Contract Procedure Rules that had been developed following meetings of a Review Group of departmental representatives from across the Council and advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer.

- RECOMMENDED :*
- 1. That Council be advised to approve the report.*
 - 2. That the Constitution be amended accordingly and make all necessary and consequential amendments.*
 - 3. That the amended version be published on the Council's website.*
 - 4. That Standards Committee facilitates a procurement training programme.*

ST.7/07

ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION PART II

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which detailed the need to continually review the Constitution to ensure that it reflected existing law and its operation continued to provide and efficient and effective framework on the delivery of the Council's Aims and Objectives.
(For copy see file of Minutes).

Member's attention was drawn to the proposed changes to the Constitution outlined in the report.

- RECOMMENDED :*
- 1. That the Constitution be amended accordingly and make all necessary and consequential amendments..*
 - 2. That the amended version be published on the Council's website.*

ST.8/07

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

1st November, 2007 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, Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4240, sbillingham@sedgefield.gov.uk