

Meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** of the Teesdale District Council held at The Dales Room, Enterprise House, Harmire Enterprise Park on **WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2008 AT 2.00PM**

**PRESENT:**

**District Council Representatives:** Cllrs RA Bell, PM Charlton, K Coates, DAR Forster, DH Reed, MWL Hamilton.

**Independent Members:** PDAustin (Vice-chair), J Hughes (Chair).

**Parish Council Representatives**  
J Blissett.

**Apologies for absence:**

Apologies of absence were received from R Thompson and T Lewis.

**Officers in Attendance:** M Dennis (Chief Governance Officer - Monitoring Officer) and G Robinson (Democratic Services Officer).

**1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN 2008/09**

That Mr John Hughes be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year, 2008/09.

The newly-appointed Chairman took the Chair.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor MWL Hamilton declared a personal interest in Item 5 part 2, Standards Board Complaints.

**3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

That Mrs Dianne Austin be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year, 2008/09.

**4 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 18 March 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**5 REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

The Chief Governance Officer (Monitoring Officer) presented an update report for consideration by members.

**(A) Membership update:**

Full Council on 23 April 2008 approved the recommendation that Councillor Rosemary Thompson, a member of Cotherstone Parish Council, be appointed as a Parish Council representative on the Standards Committee. The same Council meeting also approved the recommendation to increase the Standards Committee by the appointment of a third Parish Council representative. Interest to fill this newly created third place had been received from a member of Cockfield Parish Council, supported by the Parish Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to satisfactory interview, Council be recommended to approve the appointment of a Parish Council representative, as now discussed.

**(B) Standards Board Complaints**

The Chief Governance Officer (Monitoring Officer) presented members with an update regarding the recent complaints made to the Standards Board by a member of the Council against eight other members of the Council. The Standards Board had decided that the complaints should not be referred for investigation. The complainant had requested a review of the decision not to investigate: the original decision had been upheld.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the position be noted.
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer publicise the decision of the Standards Board.

**(C) Local Assessment**

The Chief Governance Officer (Monitoring Officer) provided members with information relating to the local assessment of complaints. The Regulations which came into force on 8 May 2008 were attached to the report along with copies of the guidance and publicity issued by the Standards Board. Members also considered a procedure for local determination of allegations against Councillors, including how the committee should organise itself to consider any complaints which might be received. A complaints leaflet and form, intended for local circulation, was also circulated to members.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Regulations, Guidance and Publicity relating to Local Assessment be noted.
- (2) That Assessment and Review Sub-Committees comprise four members, including two members of the District Council.
- (3) That a hearing be by the full Standards Committee.
- (4) That sub-committees be appointed by the Monitoring Officer as and when necessary.
- (5) That the Procedure for Local Determination of Allegations against Councillors be approved subject to the comments made in the report relating to the procedure for convening meetings and liaising with the involved parties and witnesses.
- (6) That the complaints notice and form be approved and produced as a leaflet and made available on the Council's website and details circulated to all Parish Councils and the Press.

**(D) Annual Report**

The Monitoring Officer presented the draft Annual Report to members for consideration. The Committee had previously agreed that an Annual Report on the work of the Standards Committee should be produced so that its work should be more visible to both the Council and the wider public. Members considered what arrangements should be made for presenting and circulating the Annual Report.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Annual Report be approved.
- (2) That the Annual Report be publicised on the Council website and sent to all Parish Councils and Meetings, for information.
- (3) That the Annual Report be presented to the Council.

**(E) Standards Board for England Factsheets**

The Chief Governance Officer (Monitoring Officer) circulated factsheets produced by the Standards Board, which gave useful guidance on complying with various requirements contained within the code of conduct.

**RESOLVED:**

That the factsheets be noted.

**6 STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND BULLETIN 38, APRIL 2008**

Members noted that the most recent Bulletin (No 38), issued in April 2008, had focused on the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 and the challenges facing Standards Committees in the operation of the new arrangements. The Bulletin also contained statistical information on complaints received between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008.

The Meeting closed at 2.45pm

GR/MD

**CHAIRMAN**