

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 June 2003

PRESENT: Mrs. Roberts (Chair); Councillor Flavell (Deputy Chair); Councillors Allen, B. Hoare, Lane and Mr. Romose

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Pritchard.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2003 were signed by the Chair.

3. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

None.

4. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

None.

5. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed the new members of the Committee to their first meeting and introductions were made.

6. LEGISLATION AND CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEE- REMINDER OF CURRENT POSITION

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report and elaborated thereon. He further commented that during the past year, had in addition to the comments made in the report, issued guidance to Councillors appointed to outside bodies, issued a Code of Conduct in relation to Planning Matters and undertaken the training of councillors and parish councillors in respect of Declarations of Interest.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT AND MEMBER'S INTERESTS

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report and elaborated upon the difficulties in being able to interpret definitively Personal and Prejudicial Interests. He also referred to dispensations that the Committee could grant, the requirement to declare interests at meetings (in addition to the Register of Interests) and the need to declare any hospitality received of a value in excess of £25.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

8. ROLE OF STANDARDS BOARD AND LATEST POSITION ON SECTION 66 REGULATIONS

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report and circulated recently received

information on the Section 66 Regulations that would come into force on 30 June 2003. A further report would be made to the next meeting on procedures for dealing with any cases referred to the Council by the Standards Board. Additional Regulations were likely during the Autumn in respect of the investigation of cases referred by the Standards Board. Resources to undertake investigations could be an issue.
Resolved: That the report be noted.

9. PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES (CURRENT POSITION)

The Borough Solicitor reported that NALC were seeking a replacement as substitute parish councils member and had confirmed Mr D. Hughes as their representative.
Resolved: That the report be noted.

10. REPORT ON ANNUAL CONFERENCE 9TH/10TH JUNE 2003

The Chair reported that she and the Borough Solicitor had attended the second annual Assembly of Standards Committees that had taken place in Birmingham the previous week. The Assembly covered Police and Fire Authorities as well as local authorities and parish councils. The theme of the Assembly had been "A Practical Approach" and the realities of applying the new Code of Conduct and building confidence in local democracy. There had been a range of speakers and workshops the most notable being; experiences at Doncaster Borough Council, public perception of ethics in local government, the Government's vision for local democracy and ethics, legal interpretation, mediation and reconciliation, predetermination and independent members and monitoring officers.
Resolved: That the report be noted.

11. TRAINING FOR NEW COUNCILLORS- 24 JULY 2003

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report and invited comments upon whether parish councillors should be invited to the same session as councillors. It was agreed that as attendance by parish councillors had been poor on the previous occasion that they be invited to attend the Training planned for 24 July 2003.
Resolved; That the training programme set out in the report for 24 July 2003 be agreed.

12. THE CHAIR TO MOVE:

The meeting concluded at 18.42 hours.

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