

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 9 September 2003

PRESENT: Mrs. Roberts (Chair); Councillor Flavell (Deputy Chair); Councillors B. Hoare and Pritchard, Messrs Hughes and Ramose

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Allen and Lane

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 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

The Chair was of the opinion that the following item be discussed as a matter of urgency due to the undue delay if consideration of it were deferred:

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION BY STANDARDS BOARD

The Borough Solicitor circulated a copy of a case summary received from the Standards Board for the information of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the case summary be noted.

5. SECTION 66 REGULATIONS

The Borough Solicitor submitted a revised report and commented that the first phase Regulations had now been published and which confirmed that some issues would be referred by Ethical Standards Officers back to local Standards Committees. It was anticipated that the second phase Regulations would allow some investigations to take place locally. He reiterated the decisions that the Ethical Standards Officer could make and the penalties that a local panel of the Standards Committee could impose. A discussion ensued in respect of the procedures set out in the report. It was noted that there was no provision for a matter to be referred back to the Standards Board if in the light of a local hearing the penalties did not seem to be adequate. It appeared that the Ethical Standards Officer's initial investigation would explore the depth of the matter before deciding to refer it locally.

The Borough Solicitor commented that Monitoring Officers in the County were discussing a tentative arrangement to assist each other where advice may have been offered to a member who then became the subject of a complaint.

RESOLVED: That the local procedures and forms attached to the report be approved.

6. FEEDBACK ON TRAINING FOR NEW COUNCILLORS

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report and commented that all members had received a copy of the Code of Conduct and the Guide to Appointments on Outside Bodies. The disappointing response to the training was noted. The possibility of presenting a session to the 2004 local Parish Councils AGM would be explored as would a way of keeping Councillors generally informed of Standards related issues, with a possible report to the December meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

7. UPDATE ON STANDARDS BOARD

The Borough Solicitor circulated copies of the latest Bulletins published by the Standards Board and elaborated thereon and on the information currently available on their website

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8. PROPOSED PROTOCOL- MEMBER/ OFFICER RELATIONSHIPS

Item withdrawn

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Meeting Concluded at 18. 20 hours

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