

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, 22 June 2004**

**PRESENT:** Mrs Roberts(Chair); Councillor Flavell (Deputy Chair); Councillors Allen, B. Hoare, Pritchard and Mr Ramose.

**1. APOLOGIES**

An apology was received from Mr D Hughes.

**2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 March 2004 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. PARISH COUNCILS- WELCOME TO SUBSTITUTE MEMBER, MRS M EDWARDS**

This item was deferred in the absence of a Parish Council's representative.

**6. PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER/ OFFICER RELATIONS; AMENDMENTS FROM EXECUTIVE AND OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report that set out the results of the references to the Executive and the meeting of the Chairs and Deputies of Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The revised Protocol highlighted the changes that had been suggested and it was noted that the new title of the Chief Executive had replaced the old title of Chief Executive and Town Clerk. In Paragraph 7.1 it was noted that the reference to the Head of Paid Service should be amended to read Chief Executive.

**RESOLVED:** That the amendments suggested by the Chairs and Deputies of Overview and Scrutiny Committees be adopted.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Council adopt the Protocol for Member Officer Relations and that it be included in the Constitution.

**7. INVESTIGATIONS BY LOCAL STANDARDS COMMITTEES; PROGRESS OF DRAFT REGULATIONS**

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report and commented that a response by the ODPM to the consultation was still awaited.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

## **8. PROPOSED NEWSLETTER-DRAFT**

The Borough Solicitor referred to the draft Newsletter circulated with the Agenda and commented that it was intended to be circulated to all Councillors and Parish Councillors. The Newsletter was welcomed and it was agreed that the following amendments be made:

- that the titles “Standards Board Advice” and “Freemasons” be reversed so as to give greater prominence to the word “Freemasons”
- that in the item on Statistics the second bullet point should refer to “Members of Parish Councils”
- that the item on Statistics should be clarified to refer to national statistics
- that Mrs Edwards, the substitute Parish Council member be added to the membership of the Standards Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the Newsletter as amended be published to Councillors and Parish Councillors.

## **9. SETTING HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS- INSPECTION BY THE AUDIT COMMISSION**

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report that commented upon an audit of the Council’s new political management arrangements undertaken by the Audit Commission. The final report from the Auditor was awaited however it had appeared that he had been generally happy with the work that the Standards Committee had undertaken so far. The Auditor had raised the question of monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct. However, given that this was a responsibility placed on individual Councillors and that it would be difficult for someone else, unless they had personal knowledge of the circumstances of the individual concerned, to know if appropriate interests were being declared or not, that this was difficult to monitor. There was no evidence that there was any widespread evasion of the Code.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

## **10. STANDARDS- REPORT ON THE NATIONAL POSITION AND UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS**

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report and elaborated thereon and circulated Bulletin No 19.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

## **11. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Chair moved that the Public and Press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that there was likely to be disclosure to them of such categories of exempt information as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 as listed against such items of business by reference to the appropriate paragraph of Schedule 12A to such Act.

The Motion was Carried.

## **12. PARISH MATTER**

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which set out correspondence received from the Standards Board for England dated 27 April 2004.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 18.15 hours

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