

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 27 June 2007

### Present:-

Councillor Hilda Sterry (Chair)  
Councillors Branston, Choules and Hannaford

(Independent members)  
Professor B Kirby and Andrew Mimmack

### Also Present

Head of Legal Services and Member Services Manager

5

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held on 28 February 2007 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

6

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

7

### **MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS**

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive/Deputy Monitoring Officer was submitted advising members of the Government's revised Model Code of Conduct and recommending to Council the adoption of the Code.

Standards Committee had formally responded to the Government's Consultation on Amendments to the Model Code of Conduct following consideration at their meeting on 28 February 2007. The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 was subsequently laid before Parliament on 4 April 2007 and the revised Model Code of Conduct for members came into force on 3 May 2007. Councils had until 1 October 2007 to adopt it, after which date the Code would apply automatically.

The Committee noted that the Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer would deliver training on the Code in September 2007 to which all members of the Council would be invited. All members would be required to sign a written undertaking that they would abide by the Code by the end of September prior to its formal adoption by Council with effect from 28 September 2007. The existing Code of Conduct would continue to apply until that date.

The Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer identified the most significant changes in the new Code which would be drawn to the attention of members at the training sessions.

The Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer reported back on the Standards Board Roadshow that she had attended, together with the Chair of the Committee, Professor Brian Kirby and the Assistant Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer on 20 June. The Chair expressed appreciation to the Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer for having kept members informed of the changes in relation to the new Code and Standards Board procedures.

The Committee recommended the adoption of the revised Model Code, unamended, as this Council's Code of Conduct for Members. They also supported the retention of the ten General Principles of Good Conduct within the Constitution.

**RECOMMENDED** that:-

- (1) the Council adopt as its local members' code of conduct the document set out in the Appendix to the report with effect from 28 September 2007;
- (2) all members of the Council be asked to sign a written declaration that they will abide by the revised Code of Conduct by 28 September 2007;
- (3) the Monitoring Officer be requested to undertake training for members on the revised Code of Conduct in September 2007; and
- (4) the revised code replace the existing code in the Council's Constitution.

(Report circulated)

8

**SOUTH WEST INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

Andrew Mimmack reported on the conference of the South West Independent Members of Standards Committees that he had attended together with the Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer on 2 March 2007 in Bristol. He informed members that the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill would raise the profile of Standards Committees and would also require the appointment of an independent member as Chair of the Committee. He reported that it had also been proposed that Standards Committees may require a two-tier structure to enable the filtering of cases to be separated from their determination.

The Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer commented that the Council appreciated that it had been very fortunate in retaining high calibre independent members of the Standards Committee as she had been advised that some Councils had struggled to recruit suitable persons. Whilst amalgamation between Standards Committees was considered an option that may be beneficial in some areas, members were of the view that it was unlikely to be appropriate for this Council. The Committee noted that the terms of reference and procedures for the Standards Committee would require review in due course to reflect the various changes that were coming forward.

**STANDARDS BOARD - UPDATE ON CASES**

The Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer advised members that updated statistics and details of recent cases of interest were available on the website of the Standards Board for England <http://www.standardsboard.gov.uk/>

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Standards Committee will take place on Wednesday 5 September 2007 at 4.30pm.

(The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm and closed at 5.20 pm)

Chair