

NORTH DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, NORDON, SALISBURY ROAD, BLANDFORD FORUM ON 20 MARCH 2008 AT 10:00AM

Present: Air Cdre I McNeil (Chairman)
L G Fraser (Independent)
Councillor I A Campbell
Parish Councillor E J Horton (DAPTC)
Councillor Mrs Jones, MBE
Town Councillor Mrs J Stayt (DAPTC)

Apologies: Councillor Hitchings.

Also present: Stuart Caundle, Solicitor to the Council
Jo Williams, Democratic Services Manager
Vic Smith, Financial Services Manager (Minute 27).

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

26. MINUTES

Resolved

To approve the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 13 December 2007 and 8 February 2008 and to sign them as a correct record subject to the correction of the typographical error in the response to Question 14 on the Appendix to the Minutes.

27. CODES AND PROTOCOLS

The Committee received the report of the Financial Services Manager reviewing and updating the codes and protocols that fall within the remit of the Standards Committee and seeking their inclusion in Section 5 of the Constitution.

Resolved

That the amended Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Whistle-blowing Policy be approved and referred to the Personnel Committee subject to the following amendments:

Appendix A to the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy – in the paragraph entitled 'The Public' the reporting of concerns to be to the Chief Executive.

Whistle-blowing Policy – in the section entitled 'Procedure' the second paragraph to be moved to the top and the wording of the first paragraph to be clarified.

28. **CORPORATE COMPLAINTS – 3RD QUARTER**

This report was withdrawn from the agenda.

29. **DRAFT STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

Members considered the draft Standards Committee Annual Report for 2007/08.

Resolved

To approve the Standards Committee Annual Report 2007/08 for submission to the full Council Meeting on 25 April 2008.

30. **STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09**

Members received the draft Work Programme for the Committee for 2008/09 which was tabled at the meeting.

The Committee was circulated with a booklet of training exercises to be used in preparing for local assessment of Code of Conduct complaints. Members agreed that two exercises would be worked through by the Committee at each of its forthcoming meetings.

Members noted that a special meeting of the Committee would be required once the Regulations governing local assessment were published. The Chairman raised that consideration would need to be given to increasing the allowances paid to co-opted members of the Committee once the level of workload associated with local assessment was known.

Resolved

To approve the Work Programme for the Committee for 2008/09 as attached at the Appendix to these Minutes.

31. **MEMBERS ATTENDANCE AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

The Committee noted the quarterly report of Members' Attendance at meetings between 5 December 2007 and 7 March 2008.

32. **URGENT ITEM – REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION FROM PIMPERNE PARISH COUNCIL**

Request for Dispensation – Pimperne Parish Council

The Chairman agreed to consider the above item of urgent business on the grounds that a decision was required prior to the next meeting of the Standards Committee in order for a planning application for a new village school to be considered by the Parish Council within the consultation period.

The Committee noted requests from four members of Pimperne Parish Council made under the Standards Committee Regulations 2002 for dispensations from personal and prejudicial interests. These were to allow the members concerned, who are governors at the current village school, members of the Village Hall Committee and one of whom owns the land on which it is proposed to build the new school to take part when the issue of the planning application for the building of a new school is debated. It was noted that if these four councillors could not take part the Council meeting would be inquorate for this item.

Resolved

1. to grant dispensations to the three members of Pimperne Parish Council who are also school governors and/or members of the Village Hall Committee;
2. not to grant a dispensation to the member of the Parish Council who is the owner of the land on which it is proposed to build the new school.

The meeting ended at 11.20am

CHAIRMAN

STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/9

1. Local Assessment Case Study Event – To go through the case study familiarisation programme circulated by the Standards Board. **(by June 2008)**
2. Local Assessment Regulations Seminar – To meet with the monitoring Officer to discuss the regulations and guidance on local assessments and to identify issues. **(by June 2008)**
3. Local Standards Procedures – To add to and amend the adopted Standards procedures in light of the new regulations on local assessments. **(by July 2008)**
4. Publicity for Local Assessment – To agree how to meet the statutory requirement to publicise the new local assessment arrangements. **(by June 2008)**
5. Parish Familiarisation with Local Assessment – To offer information/familiarisation to town and parish councils on the operation of the new local assessment arrangements. **(by September 2008)**
6. Joint Working on Local Assessments – To make a recommendation to the Council's Political Management Panel with regard to possible joint working with neighbouring councils on local assessments. **(by September/October 2008)**
7. Registers of Financial and Other Interests – To review the operation of the Council's registers of Financial and Other Interests. **(by December 2008)**
8. Monitoring the Operation of the Code of Conduct – To review the conduct of Councillors at district and parish level by reference to complaints made during the year and the outcome of those complaints. To make any proposals on training to feed into the following year's work programme. **(by March 2009)**