

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 November 2010 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs Falp, Gifford, Guest, Heath, Mrs Knight, McFarland and Mrs Tyrrell.

Independent Representatives: Mr C Purser (Chair), Mr C Bennett and Mr P Willers.

Parish and Town Council Representatives: Councillors Polgreen, Singh and Smart.

Officers: Mr A Jones (Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer) and Mr G Leach (Senior Committee Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Mellor and Miss J Ratcliffe.

10. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

11. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2010 were taken as read, approved by the Committee, subject to a minor amendment to Minute 9 resolution (4) being amended to read Employees Code of Conduct, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

12. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (2009-10) ACTION PLAN, MID-YEAR UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive that provided an update on the Annual Governance Statement for 2009/10 Action Plan.

The Action Plan has been agreed as an integral part of the statement of Warwick District Council's Accounts for 2009-10 and the update report had been requested by this Committee to ensure progress on the Action Plan was on course for completion.

The Deputy Chief Executive outlined the main points of the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan and explained that since the last meeting the Council had now adopted its Corporate Business Improvement Plan (Fit for the Future) a large number of actions had now been signed off.

RESOLVED that the progress made to date on the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan for 2009-10, be noted.

13. **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive's Office that provided guidance for Councillors on the use of emails and letters and on their appointments to outside bodies, which was set out at in the appendices to the report.

The Guidance had been produced following a recent Assessment Sub-Committee who had raised concern in this area. The Council had adopted an Information & Security Policy which was binding all on members of staff and Councillors. To date only 22 of the 46 Councillors had responded to acknowledge they had read the policy and agreed with it.

The Senior Committee Services Officer explained that a Councillor had seen the report and asked for guidance on the use of Council email addresses in political newsletters. Based on this request he advised that the following be added to the guidance document "Members need to be cautious when using their Council email addresses in local news letters, particularly local party newsletters, distributed directly to households. This is of utmost importance during election time and/or when newsletters are overtly politically campaigning and in these instances the Council email address should not be used."

The Senior Committee Services Officer responded to questions from the Committee with regard to the use of emails and letters. The Committee were content with its content subject to the guidance on email content being set out explicitly as guidance and not as potential breach of the Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the guidance appended to the report regarding use of email and writing letters, subject to the amendments above, be issued to all Warwick District Councillors and all Parish/Town Clerks;
- (2) the guidance on the responsibilities of members when appointed to outside bodies be issued to all Warwick District Councillors and all Parish/Town Councillors;
- (3) those Warwick District Councillors who have not signed up to the Council's Information & Security Policy be reissued with a copy and asked to confirm their agreement to it within one month and if not, provide an explanation as to why they are not prepared to sign to it.

14. WORK PLAN

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services setting out its agreed work plan for the ensuing municipal year.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

RESOLVED that the work plan be agreed subject to an update on government changes relating to Standards for England be brought to the February meeting.

(The meeting ended at 7.35 pm)

