

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 December 2005 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Guest (Chairman); Councillors Davis and Short

Councillors Mrs A Gordon and B Smart, and the Venerable M Paget-Wilkes

739. **COUNCILLOR GRAHAM WINDYBANK**

At the commencement of the meeting, the Committee stood in silence as a mark of respect in memory of the late Councillor Graham Windybank.

740. **MONITORING OFFICER**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Simon Best, Head of Legal Services, who had also taken on the role of Monitoring Officer and was attending his first meeting of the Committee.

741. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

742. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2005, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

743. **MEMBERS' REGISTER OF FINANCIAL INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS UNDER THE MANDATORY CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Register containing details of financial and other interests, notified by individual Councillors, was made available for inspection by Members of the Committee.

744. **APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER**

The Committee considered the arrangements for appointing an Independent Member to the Committee.

Information had been received from a member of the public who was interested in becoming a Member of the Committee as an independent representative, but the Committee discussed the advantages of attempting to increase the number of candidates through placing an advertisement in the local press. This could also enable a reserve Member to be appointed.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

RESOLVED that the Monitoring Officer be requested to investigate the process for recruiting an Independent Member, and reserve Member, to the Committee.

745. PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraph 16 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

746. INVESTIGATION INTO COMPLAINTS DEFERRED BY THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND

The Committee considered reports from the Deputy Monitoring Officer regarding the outcome of the investigations he had conducted into complaints (reference numbers SBE 12107.05 and SBE 12109.05), made by a member of the public to the Standards Board for England, regarding the conduct of two Members of the Council.

The two complaints had been given preliminary consideration by an Ethical Standards Officer of the Standards Board for England who, under Section 16(2) of the Local Government Act 2000, decided to refer them to the Deputy Monitoring Officer for investigation (in the absence of the Monitoring Officer).

The Standards Committee was required to consider the reports and to decide whether, based on the facts set out, it agreed with the findings or believed that there was a case to answer.

Having completed the investigations, the Deputy Monitoring Officer had concluded that, in both cases, no breach of the Code of Conduct had taken place. The Committee then considered the reports at length.

The Committee felt that Members of the Council should be reminded of the importance of considering whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in any matters before the Committee meeting. The Monitoring Officer was also requested to contact the two Members involved to re-iterate the need to consult with him if they felt any future problems could occur.

RESOLVED that the findings of the Deputy Monitoring Officer in respect of both complaints be supported as it was believed that there had been no breach of the Code of Conduct.

(The meeting ended at 7.25 pm)