

# STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 November 2006 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Guest (Chairman) and Councillor Davis.

Mr P Cruden, Councillor Mrs A Gordon, Mr C Purser and Councillor B Smart.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Short.

## 583. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 584. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2006, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## 585. **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.

## 586. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – ANNUAL LETTER 2005/06**

The Committee received the Annual Letter from the Local Government Ombudsman regarding complaints made against the Council during 2005/06

During the reported year (2005/06), a total of 35 complaints were received by the Ombudsman compared to 34 in the previous year. Seven complaints were referred back to the Council for consideration under the Complaints Procedure.

Of the 35 complaints six were settled locally and no reports were issued against the Council.

In his letter, the Ombudsman referred to two complaints upon which he had requested further details of reviews which had been carried out as a result. These concerned procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour and housing transfers. A response to this request had been made by the Head of Housing Service which had been accepted by the Ombudsman.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### **587. FUTURE TRAINING FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The Committee considered the arrangements for a training seminar.

**RESOLVED** that the training seminar takes place on 25 January 2007 in room 3.24 at Riverside House at 2.00pm.

### **588. DIRECTORSHIPS**

The Committee considered a report from Legal Services which responded to the request by the Executive to provide advice on:

- (a) the role and responsibility of councillors appointed as Board Directors and what declarations of interest they should make when attending Council meetings which are discussing the performance of the companies involved; and
- (b) if the Council did not appoint councillors as directors how could the work of the companies be scrutinised effectively and performance levels guaranteed.

Appended to the report was a guidance note produced by the Council's Monitoring Officer with regard to (a) above.

The Committee considered options for addressing point (b) during the meeting and suggested that the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees and Policy Committees should receive reports annually from the companies and charities to whom the Council gave funding. However the size of these reports would need to be considered and perhaps a specific template should be adopted.

**RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) subject to the fifth paragraph under the heading "Conflict of interest and Bias" being rewritten in an easier format the guidance note on declarations of interest be approved;
- (2) once approved by Council the guidance note be circulated to all members of Warwick District Council and all clerks to Parish and Town Councils within Warwick District for information; and
- (3) the annual reports from the companies and charities to whom the Council gave funding to be passed to the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee or Policy Committee annually in a prescribed format.

(The meeting ended at 6.42 pm)