

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 15 June 2009, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs Falp, Gifford, Mrs Knight, Mrs McFarland, and Vincett.

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

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

Officers: Mr R Inman (Assistant Chief Executive (Members' Services)), Mr A Jones (Interim Deputy Chief Executive), and Mr G Leach (Senior Committee Services Officer)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Coker and Mrs Tyrrell.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2009 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

In addition the Committee agreed that from this meeting the officers present at the meeting should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

10. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09

The Committee considered a report from Finance outlining the Internal Audit Annual report for 2008/09 which formed part of the evidence for the Annual Governance Statement of the Council.

The Committee was required to consider the report as part of the approval process for the Annual Governance Statement of the Council. The Internal Audit Annual report provided an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's control environment.

The report had been considered by the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2009 who had not raised any issues with its content and recommended it to the Standards Committee for approval.

The Standards Committee requested that they be provided with a detailed breakdown of the non chargeable hours by email for future reference.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee considered a report from Finance regarding the outcomes from the review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal audit for the year that ended 31 March 2009.

The review of effectiveness of internal audit was undertaken in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006. The regulations required such a review at least once a year and presentation of the results to the Committee designated to consider or approve the Annual Governance Statement.

The report had been considered by the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2009, who had noted the report but had also expressed some concern regarding the small number of responses received to the customer survey. The Committee noted that a new approach was used this year and this would be revised again for next year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Committee considered a report from the Interim Deputy Chief Executive that detailed the Annual Governance Statement for 2008/09.

The governance framework produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authorities' Chief Executives (SOLACE) required an Annual Governance Statement to be produced which replaced the Statement of Internal Control with effect from 1 April 2007.

The framework set out a number of stages in producing the Annual Governance Statement which were enclosed with the report together with the Action Plan. The evidence for the production of the plan along with the communication strategy were appended to the report.

The Annual Governance Statement had to be signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council but this could only be done on a recommendation of the Standards Committee.

The Interim Deputy Chief Executive responded to questions from the Committee and assured members that the format of the Statement and associated documents would be improved during the year with a view to including the revised versions in the half year report to the Committee in November.

RESOLVED that

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

- (1) the Warwick District Council Annual Governance Statement for 2008/09 and action plan as appended to the report, be approved for signing;
- (2) the action plan for 2008/09 be brought before this Committee for a half year review in November 2009;
- (3) the communication plan for the Governance Statement be approved; and
- (4) the Code of Corporate Governance be adopted.

13. WORK PLAN

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

The Senior Committee Services Officer reported to the meeting that the report on the Annual Assessment of Complaints had not been brought to the meeting because the Council was yet to receive its Annual report from the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Senior Committee Services Officer also reported that the Warwick District Council complaints process had not been brought to the meeting because it had not been considered yet by the Council's Corporate Management Team.

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted subject to the reports on the Annual Assessment of Complaints against the Council and the Councils Complaints process being moved to the September meeting of the Committee.

(The meeting ended at 6.55 pm)