

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND ESSEX FIRE
AUTHORITY JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL,
CHELMSFORD, ON 25 NOVEMBER 2010**

Membership

**Appointed by Essex County
Council**

Independent Members:

- * Mr A French (Chairman)
- Mr D Farrow (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr C Jackman

Vacancy

Councillors:

- * R Bass (Chairman of the Council,
ex officio)
- * C Pond
- * Mrs M Fisher
- * M Mackrory
- * J Pike
- D Robinson
- * K Twitchen
- Mrs M Webster
- Vacancy
- * Present

**Appointed by Essex Fire
Authority**

Independent Member:

Mr M Goodswen

Councillors:

- S McPherson (Thurrock Borough
Council)
- * R Pearson (Essex County Council)
- * Fay Evans (Southend Borough
Council)

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Vivien Door
Alex Hallam
Colin Ismay

Committee Officer
Deputy County Solicitor
Governance Manager

54. Apologies

The Committee Officer reported apologies from County Councillor Robinson, Mr Goodswen and Mr Farrow.

55. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

56. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman with the following amendment in Minute 52, Exclusion of the Public which should read, "... in Part 1 of Schedule 21A of the Local Government Act 1972 ...".

57. Matters Arising

Minute 41, Apologies: there was still currently an Essex Councillor vacancy. The Leader of the Council has been asked to nominate a replacement.

Minute 44, Matters Arising: Update on Independent Member Recruitment
Interviews were likely to take place on 6 December 2010. Three candidates from Maldon District had been invited to interview in addition to those who had applied directly to Essex County Council.

Members Allowances Schemes

Colin Ismay updated the Committee on progress. The Committee discussed the implications of the Council's decision to proceed with the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel.

The Governance Manager will continue discussion to obtain more guidance on how the scheme will be implemented.

58. Members Code of Conduct

The Committee received report (SC/018/10) by Colin Ismay, Head of Scrutiny and Lead Governance Officer, outlining ways to inform Members of issues relevant to the Code of Conduct.

The Committee agreed that whilst the Handbook should provide clear unambiguous guidance, consideration be given to the best way to supplement the guidance with case studies and further advice.

59. Standards for England

The Committee received an oral report on the latest thinking by the Government on the future of the Standards regime by Alex Hallam, Deputy County Solicitor.

60. The Council's Code of Corporate Governance and Constitution

The Committee received an oral report from Colin Ismay, Head of Scrutiny and Lead Governance Officer.

He explained progress being made to review the Council's Constitution and to establish this as part of a Corporate Governance Framework bringing together all relevant documents. The proposals will be going to Council on 14 December. In parallel with this a new site is being established on the Council's Intranet site on how the Council gets things done which will include a zone specifically for Members.

61. Update on the Website and CMIS

The Committee received an oral from Colin Ismay, Head of Scrutiny and Lead Governance Officer.

The new website and CMIS were now both live. The CMIS website gives more details on Members and specifically on their register of interests which was the matter the Committee was concerned about in the first place. Members have amended and approved their individual details on the website. Officers in the Governance Team have worked hard to input all the information and achieved the first Council's Forward Plan this month. Training for the Committee Management Tool still needs to take place. The old data had been imported from COMAD to CMIS and COMAD had been taken off the website.

The Committee agreed that it would not require any further updates on the website or CMIS.

62. Members Handbook

The Committee received the draft Handbook for Members from Colin Ismay, Head of Scrutiny and Lead Governance Officer.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- That some more practical advice would be helpful;
- That Independent Members were co-opted Members of Essex County Council and therefore bound by the Members Code of Conduct;
- All references to the Standards Board should be amended to read Standards for England;
- That this Handbook would be updated as required in consultation with the Chairman.

Resolved:

The Committee approved the Standards Members Handbook.

63. Member Appointment Panels

The Committee received a report (SC/019/10) on Member involvement in Senior Manager Appointments by Alex Hallam, Deputy County Solicitor. The Member Appointment Panels were politically proportionately represented.

64. Future Meetings

The Governance Manager and the Deputy County Solicitor informed the Committee that a report on the Ethical Governance Diagnostic carried out by the Audit Commission was anticipated to be brought to both the Audit Committee and the Standards Committee in December 2010.

65. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting as follows:

Thursday 16 December 2010 at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 2

Resolved:

That the Committee Officer would look for new dates for the January and May meetings.

66. Urgent Business Part 1

As there was no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 3.15 pm.

Chairman
16 December 2010