

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON 4 DECEMBER 2009**Membership****Appointed by Essex County Council****Independent Members:**

- * Professor R M Atkinson
(Chairman)
- Mr D Farrow
- * Mr A French (Vice-Chairman)

Mr C Jackman

Councillors:

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

Appointed by the Essex Fire Authority**Independent Member:**

- * Mr M Goodswen

Councillors:

- S McPherson (Thurrock Borough Council)
- R Pearson (Essex County Council)
- * D White (Southend Borough Council)

* Present

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Alex Hallam
Colin Ismay
Vivien Door

Deputy County Solicitor
Governance Manager
Committee Officer

46. Apologies

The Committee Officer reported apologies from County Councillors Mrs M Fisher, Mrs E Hart, J Pike, K Twitchen and Mrs M Webster and Mr D Farrow.

47. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

48. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

49. Chairman's Report

The Chairman had nothing he wished to report at this meeting.

50. Draft procedures for the Consideration and Hearings Sub-Committee

The Committee received the draft procedures for the Consideration and Hearings Sub-Committee, SC/019/09, from the Deputy County Solicitor.

Resolved:

The Committee requested that the draft procedures be amended by the Deputy County Solicitor.

That any witnesses will be questioned through asking permission from the Chairman, the Chairman could then intervene if appropriate.

That the Deputy County Solicitor would contact Standards for England regarding clarity on the following points:

- Section 4.1.3 regarding who should receive copies of the report;
- Section 4.1.6 regarding the Sub-Committee receiving a summary, as some Members were concerned that they would need all the information to make an informed decision.

The Committee agreed that in Section 5.1.7 the Agenda should be sent out to Members two weeks before the meeting to give them time to read these documents.

The Committee agreed in Section 6, legal advice, that the Sub-Committee may adjourn to hear the legal advice and then may ask for this advice to be re-stated in the public meeting.

The Committee agreed that five Members should be appointed and available on the day for these meetings as Members may have to declare interests when they are informed about the case. This should ensure that there are three Members to sit on the Sub-Committee. Two of these five Members should be independent Members. A pre-meeting should take place for these Sub-Committees.

The Committee agreed that the Chairman and the Deputy County Solicitor would agree and amend the report accordingly and then circulate the final report to Members.

51. Case Summary Complaint Reference LAWA 717

The Committee considered report SC/020/09 and Annexes 1 and 2 by the Deputy County Solicitor.

Resolved:

That the Committee noted the findings of the Ethical Standards Officer, Standards for England, on case number SBE06045 namely that:

The Ethical Standards Officer found that the Member failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, but in the circumstances of the case, no further action needed to be taken.

52. The Conduct of a Hearing

The Committee agreed to view the DVD prepared by Standards for England and to discuss and matters arising from it after the meeting had closed as some Members had a clash of meetings. It was agreed that further copies of the DVD would be made available.

53. Date and Time of Future Meeting(s)

The Committee was advised that the next meeting was scheduled for Friday, 22 January 2010 at 10 am in Committee Room 1.

54. Exclusion of the Public

As there was no Part 2 business the Chairman closed the meeting at 15.10.

Chairman
22 January 2010