

London Borough of Islington
Standards Committee –9th June 2009

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at the Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 9th June 2009.

PRESENT: Diana Gibbs, Godfrey Stadlen, Jane McNeill and Alison Vydulinska.

Councillor George Allan

Jane McNeill in the Chair

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED:

That Jane McNeill be elected chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Father Jim Kennedy.

3. DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

None.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

6. ISLINGTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP CONSITUTION (Item 5)

RESOLVED:

That the following comments be taken on board and a re-drafted version of the Constitution covering the conduct of members be submitted to a future meeting of the committee:

Page 2 – Standards of Behaviour

The first two bullets concerning influencing and personal and political opinions to be redrafted with a view to achieving clearer and more specific guidance.

The seventh bullet be redrafted to read ‘Not to disclose confidential information’.

Page 3 – Conflicts of Interest

The provisions be simplified for the ISP, possibly removing the distinction between personal and prejudicial interests and only requiring those of a financial nature to be declared.

It was recognised that all members of the ISP and theme groups would require training on this section on Code of Conduct for this to be properly understood.

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Page 4 – Breaches of Standards of Behaviour

There was some concern about the proposal to refer issues of misconduct matters back to the nominating organisation as this would mean that different members of the board would be subject to different codes of conduct and procedures and this was not desirable. On balance, it was considered that ISP should adopt a procedure allowing it to investigate and deal with any matters in the first instance. It may be possible to use the Standards Committee as an appellate body. It was recognised that this may mean some members being subject to two separate sets of proceedings and noted that where the complaint was against an elected member, if the issue was raised direct with the ISP, the complainant should be told that they had a choice between referring the matter to the ISP or to the Standards Committee.

Where a matter had been raised direct with the Monitoring Officer or had been sent direct via the Standards Committee complaints process, this would have to be dealt with direct by the Standards Committee

7. REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY (Item 6)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

Noted that members and groups are reminded of the need to declare any gifts or hospitality with an estimated value of £25 or more.

8. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (Item 7)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the committee look at the matter in six months time to see what, if any, use had been made of this provision.

Noted that members would be briefed on the procedures over the next month.

9. FEEDBACK FROM VISITS BY INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO COUNCIL MEETING (Item 8)

RESOLVED:

1. The diary setting out all dates of Council meetings for the rest of the Municipal Year be circulated to all Independent Members.

2. Given the focus of Overview and Scrutiny and the need to involve the public in these meetings, members should consider how poor behaviour between Councillors might alienate lay attendees.

Alison Vydulinska gave feedback from her visit to an Overview Committee. Although the meeting and chairing was generally effective, the Chair and a member of the Opposition appeared to be enjoying a personal dialogue of mutual criticism. However, there was a member of the public in the room waiting to be questioned about consultation and the Councillors behaviour towards each other had clearly unnerved him.

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10. ANY URGENT BUSINESS

New Standards Committee Regulations

Alison advised of the new regulations and suggested a report to the next meeting on these would be helpful for the Committee.

The meeting which started at 7.00 pm finished at 8.15 pm.

CHAIR

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