

London Borough of Islington

Standards Committee - 3rd September 2002

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held at the Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 3rd September 2002 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Father Jim Kennedy, Mrs. Jo Michie, Mr. Paul Najsarek,
Councillors Sawyer and Stacy.

Father Jim Kennedy in the Chair

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**
None.
2. **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**
None necessary.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**
None.
4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2002 be confirmed and the Chair authorised to sign them.
5. **WHISTLEBLOWING PROCEDURE (Item 5)**
RESOLVED:
 - (a) That the Head of Human Resources be asked to look at the procedure again to see if it can be made clearer, include timescales for action and mention the process for complaints against councillors.
 - (b) The Head of Human Resources be asked to attend the next meeting of the Committee to discuss the document and other complaints procedures within the Council.
6. **UPDATE AND MONITORING OFFICER INVESTIGATION REGULATIONS (Item 6)**
Noted that the latest information from the Government suggested that the Regulations would be available sometime this autumn and brought into force in the New Year.
7. **SIGNING OF CODE DECLARATIONS (Item 7)**
Noted that one of the Education co-opted members had failed to sign up to the Code of Conduct and therefore was no longer eligible to be a co-opted member.

Officers had been in discussion with the Diocesan Board concerning the matter, who would be meeting with the individual next week. It was hoped that either the Board would resubmit the individual as a co-opted member and get them to sign the code or submit a fresh nominee.

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All other members and co-opted members had duly signed their acceptance to the Code of Conduct.

8. COMPLAINTS TO THE NATIONAL STANDARDS BOARD (Item 8)

RESOLVED:

(a) That, in future, the Monitoring Officer write to all members of the Committee when she had been advised that a complaint had been referred to the National Standards Board.

(b) Officers investigate the issue of indemnity insurance both for councillors and independent members and advise members of the current situation.

(c) That once the section 66 Regulations came into force a Register of Complaints be compiled and the Monitoring Officer report to each meeting with a short update on any complaints received and progress on these matters.

Noted that the Monitoring Officer had been advised that a complaint had been referred to the National Standards Board, concerning two councillors. The Board had appointed an Ethical Standards Officer to investigate the matter. However, the Board, when questioned could give no timescale at the moment other than to say their performance indicator to deal with complaints was within 5-6 months.

9. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DISTRICT AUDITOR (Item 9)

RESOLVED:

That the District Auditor and Audit Manager, be invited to the next meeting to discuss issues of common interest, together with looking at the issue of training for members and the skills needed should the Committee deal with investigations of complaints in the future and the various avenues and procedures in place for complaints across the authority.

The Chair reported that he had met informally with both the District Auditor, Kash Pandya and Jon Hayes, the Audit Manager who were keen to meet the Committee to discuss how it worked, share good practice from other authorities and ensure effective corporate governance for the authority.

10. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR THE COMMITTEE (Item 10)

RESOLVED:

(a) That the laid round strategy and protocol be amended as follows:

The first objective be amended to read 'to report independently to residents and stakeholders on the standards of public life in Islington'.

Section 3 of the protocol be amended to read 'The Chair of the Committee and the Director of Law, in liaison with the Press Office, draft and agree a response'.

(b) That the Chair arrange a visit to meet members of staff in the Press Office.

(c) That the Head of Communications put some initial information on the Standards Committee out now and once the Committee's role was clearer in the future that information be included in the A-Z Guide to services, the Residents' Magazine and a short annual report from the Committee be included with the information sent out with the Council Tax each year.

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(d) That the Chair present his annual report to full Council each year.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Committee be held on Tuesday, 26th November at 7.00pm.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm

CHAIR

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