

London Borough of Islington

Standards Committee – 23rd JUNE 2003

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at the Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 23rd June 2003

Present: Father Jim Kennedy, Jo Michie, Paul Najsarek
Councillors Derek Sawyer and Terry Stacy

Father Jim Kennedy in the Chair

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Matthew Saunders.

2. **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

None.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**

None.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2003 be confirmed and the Chair authorised to sign them.

In relation to Minute 5, it was noted that the trade unions had asked for clarification on some issues, and the protocol would now be submitted to the Executive for approval in August, 2003.

In relation to Minute 6, it was agreed that a new training session be arranged at 6.00pm on the 16th September before the meeting of the Council. Reference to this would be included in the annual report to Council and Cllrs Sawyer and Stacey would do their best to ensure maximum attendance

5. **STANDARDS AND ETHICS INDICATORS (Item 5)**

RESOLVED:

That the report be welcomed and that future reports include the following information:

- Any findings of maladministration in relation to Ombudsman cases and previous years information be included so trends could be seen;
- Outcomes of Employment Tribunals;
- Headline figures from the Annual Complaints Report – How many received, how many dealt with;
- Any benchmarking information to see how this compared with the rest of London;
- Commentary from the Director of Law and Public Services highlighting any important issues;

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- Annual District Auditors Management Letter and Annual Ombudsman Report;
- Checklist of Ethical Conduct used by District Auditor.

6. **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE (Item 6)**

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Report be submitted to the Council meeting on 15th July for information with the following amendments:

The second paragraph of 'What have we been doing? – we have also looked at and commented on a number of protocols drawn up by the authority including ones for Planning, Licensing and Member/Officer relations. We were also specifically responsible for getting the Authority to update its Whistleblowing policy.'

The third paragraph of 'Proposals for Improving the Committee's Effectiveness next year –

For next year's report we hope to be in a position to report on

- The regular reporting of performance indicators relating to the Authority's ethical health;
- Our new role in investigating complaints;
- Learning from best practice from other Standards Committees;
- Information set out in the Annual Report of the Ombudsman and District Auditor.

7. **INDEMNITY COVER FOR MEMBERS (Item 7)**

RESOLVED:

(1) That both Councillors Sawyer and Stacy discuss the matter with their respective Groups and report back to the next meeting.

(2) That officers clarify with the Islington Strategic Partnership whether they had any type of indemnity cover and whether they had a Code of Conduct which covered behaviour at meetings.

The Director of Law and Public Services reported that Zurich Municipal Insurance had come up with a policy that would offer cover to members on an individual basis. However, the cover would be for all members as it was not possible to only cover certain members.

The Director was still clarifying certain issues in the policy with the insurers, including increasing the amount of cover.

It was also noted that officers had delegated authority to enter into such a policy as the total price would be around £1,500 per annum.

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8. **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – NEW REGULATIONS (Item 8)**

It was noted that new regulations on Members' Allowances had recently come into force which would require authorities to revoke their existing scheme and to make a new scheme by no later than 30th September 2003.

One of the new powers in the regulations was to allow authorities to withhold both Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance from any member who had been fully or partially suspended. As it would be the Standards Committee that would recommend any suspension, this committee may also wish to make a recommendation on the issue of suspending allowances to the Council's Corporate Services Committee, who had responsibility for Members' Allowances, to consider withholding payment.

9. **ANY URGENT BUSINESS**

(i) DETERMINATION OF STANDARDS ALLEGATIONS BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (Item 9(a))

The Committee noted the report from the Director of Law and Public Services concerning the publication of the first part of the Section 66 Regulations.

Noted that the Standards Board were currently drawing up a procedure note for Committees to follow and this would be submitted to the Committee once it was available.

(ii) STANDARDS COMMITTEE TRAINING (Item 9(b))

RESOLVED:

That the Chair write to the Chair at Haringey Standards Committee, thanking him for the offer of joint training on Section 66 Regulations but this would be provided in-house at Islington. However, the committee would be happy to be part of any London-wide network that shared information/best practice with regard to Standards Committee matters.

The Chair reported that he had been approached from the Standards Committee Chairs at Haringey to see if Islington would be interested in carrying out any joint training with regard to Section 66 Regulations with neighbouring boroughs.

(iii) NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Committee be held on Monday, 8th September at 7.00 p.m.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm.

CHAIR

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