

London Borough of Islington
Standards Committee – 21 October 2008

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at the Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 21 October 2008

Present: Father Jim Kennedy, Diana Gibbs, Godfrey Stadlen and Alison Vydulinska
Councillors Phil Kelly and Paula Belford

Father Jim Kennedy in the Chair

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**
Apologies for absence were received from Jane McNeill and Councillor Stacy.
2. **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**
Councillor Paula Belford substituting for Councillor Terry Stacy.
3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Item 3)**
Councillor Phil Kelly declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in Item 5 since he was the complainant.
4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.
5. **CONSIDERATION OF COMPLAINT (Item 5)**
Councillor Kelly left the room for this item.

RESOLVED:
That the Monitoring Officers report and Councillor Stacy's response be noted. The Committee regrets that the full article had not been removed from the website.
6. **REVISED WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE (Item 6)**
RESOLVED:
 - (1) The second paragraph of 1.1 be amended to read 'The Whistleblowing Procedure is intended to encourage employees and others who are listed below to report.....'
 - (2) The heading in paragraph 2.1 be amended to read 'Reporting a concern within the management structure of your own department'.
 - (3) In relation to the second paragraph of 3.1 officers look at the phrase 'may be accompanied by a friend' in relation to the Public Interest Disclosure Act.
7. **STANDARDS AND ETHICS INDICATORS (Item 7)**
RESOLVED:
That the indicators for the second and third quarters of 2008 be noted.

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The heading on the indicators in relation to referrals and investigations undertaken by the Standards Board for England would be amended to include complaints submitted and dealt with by this Committee.

8. **CODES OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES – CLG CONSULTATION PROCESS (Item 8)**

RESOLVED:

That the suggested responses to the Consultation Paper set out in the report be approved subject to the following additions:

Question 2 – the following paragraph be added to the reply:

As in practice the process leading up to a caution is less rigorous than the process leading to a conviction, it would be helpful if the guidance proposed from the Standards Board could address specifically how to treat cautions.

Question 17 – would be against using the delegation model and prefer it was kept just to the very highest level of officers.

9. **MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2008/09 (Item 9)**

RESOLVED:

That the draft training and development programme for 2008/09 be approved subject to refresher training on the Code of Conduct being added to the list.

Independent Members were welcome to attend any of the training sessions that we arranged.

10. **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08 (Item 10)**

RESOLVED:

The draft report for 2007/08 be agreed subject to adding what future work the Committee had got planned.

The report would be presented to full Council on the 4th December at 7.30 pm and all Independent Members were invited to attend.

11. **REPORT BACK ON THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES (Item 11)**

RESOLVED:

(1) That a letter be sent to the Chair and Chief Executive of the Standards Board pointing out some of the best practice and good ideas this Committee had been doing over the last couple of years.

(2) A meeting be arranged with the local media to highlight the Committee and what it did, together with setting out a press protocol that could be adopted when dealing with questions relating to complaints, investigations and hearings.

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(3) A meeting be set up with members of the Islington Strategic Partnership to highlight the Committee and its work.

Father Jim Kennedy, Godfrey Stadlen, Diana Gibbs, Debra Norman and John Lynch all attended the Annual Assembly.

Some of the workshops had proved very useful and all the materials from all the events were now available on the Standards Board website.

12. SHADOWING OF COUNCILLORS (Item 12)

RESOLVED:

That Independent Members be sent a list of upcoming meetings with a brief idea of what was on the agenda for these.

Diana had shadowed the Leader of the Council which she found useful but due to diary clashes had not been able to shadow the Leader of the Opposition.

New members felt it would be useful to attend a range of meetings such as Executive, Overview, Scrutiny and Area Committees not only to see how these meetings worked and how Councillors behaved, but also to talk to the relevant Chairs after the meeting to get their reaction as to how they thought the meeting went and was handled.

13. FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE (Item 13)

RESOLVED:

Future meetings of the Committee be agreed as follows:

Tuesday, 27th January 2009 at 7.00 pm

Monday, 20th April 2009 at 7.00 pm

14. ANY URGENT BUSINESS

None.

The meeting ended at 8.33 pm.

CHAIR

Contact Officer: John Lynch
Designation: Head of Democratic Services
Telephone No.: 020-7527 3002
Fax No.: 020-7527 3323
E-mail: john.lynch@islington.gov.uk