

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday, 24 September 2003 at Pelham House, Lewes.

---

1. PRESENT - Mrs C Swan (Independent Chairman),  
Councillors Bridger, Whetstone and Woodall

2. MINUTES

2.1 RESOLVED - to approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 8 March 2002 as a correct record.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 The Committee noted that following Councillor Stevens' resignation from the Labour Group on the County Council, Councillor Bridger had replaced him on the Committee.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ETHICAL STANDARDS OFFICERS' REPORTS

4.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Performance Management.

4.2 RESOLVED - to (1) note the new power for Ethical Standards Officers of the Standards Board to refer their completed reports to local authority Standards Committees for determination;

(2) authorise the Director of Law and Performance Management, after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to settle a guidance note on the procedure to be followed when dealing with reports received from Ethical Standards Officers on allegations of misconduct, based on the statutory Regulations and the guidance issued by the Standards Board; and

(3) recommend the County Council to amend sub-paragraph (g) of the terms of reference of the Committee to read as follows:

dealing with any reports of Ethical Standards Officers of the Standards Board on allegations of breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct that are referred to the Monitoring Officer for local determination and any such allegations referred to the Monitoring Officer for local investigation.

5. INDEMNITIES FOR MEMBERS

5.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Performance Management.

5.2 RESOLVED – (1) to support the view in the consultation paper that in the majority of cases it should not be necessary for members to be legally represented when defending themselves against allegations of misconduct;

(2) to recognise that there will, however, be cases where legal representation can be justified and to propose that provision should be made for local

authorities to reimburse reasonable expenses where this is justified due to exceptional circumstances. Each case would need to be considered on its merits; and

(3) to support the view in the consultation paper that reimbursement should only be considered in situations where the Committee found that the member had not failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or that the member had failed to comply with the Code but that no action needed to be taken.