

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Thursday 24 July 2008 at County Hall, Lewes.

7. PRESENT - Mrs C Swan (Independent Chairman),
Mrs A Holden (Independent member)
Councillors Daniel and Stogdon

8. MINUTES

8.1 RESOLVED - to approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 16 April 2008 as a correct record.

9. APOLOGIES

9.1 Apologies were received from T Elliott (Independent Member) and Councillor Woodall

10. THE LOCAL HANDLING OF STANDARDS COMPLAINTS

10.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Personnel (copy in the Minute Book) setting out the structure and process for the handling of alleged complaints about the ethical standards of Councillors. The report included guidance and protocols.

10.2 RESOLVED

(i) that an Assessment Sub-Committee be established with terms of reference and composition of membership as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;

(ii) that a Review Sub-Committee be established with terms of reference and composition of membership as set out in Appendix 3 of the report;

(iii) that a Hearings Sub-Committee be established with terms of reference and composition of membership as set out in Appendix 4 of the report subject to agreed minor amendment;

(iv) that members would not be allocated to sit on, or chair, any of the sub-committees established under resolutions (i) to (iii) above, and that such membership will be determined by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with available members of the Committee not having a conflict of interest;

(v) that the amended terms of reference for the Committee be approved as set out in Appendix 5 of the report;

(vi) to note the steps taken on behalf of the Monitoring Officer as set out in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 of Appendix 1;

(vii) that the Monitoring Officer be instructed to notify the relevant member of receipt of a complaint and provide a written summary of the allegation at the same time as acknowledging receipt to the person making the allegation. The notification should be sent no later than the date of publication of the agenda for the meeting of

the Assessment Sub-Committee to members of that sub-committee, unless after consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee she/he considers it appropriate to defer notification in order to enable a proper investigation to take place, in which case notification should be made as soon as the reasons for the deferral no longer apply;

(viii) to approve the adoption of the local protocol as set out in Appendix 6, subject to agreed minor amendments;

(ix) that anonymous complaints would not be entertained, but that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to keep the identity of the complainant confidential where she/he is of the opinion that this is in the public interest;

(x) that the Assessment and Review Sub-Committees be recommended to hold its meetings in camera unless the relevant sub-committee determine otherwise in any particular instance;

(xi) to note the draft proposed arrangements and procedures for dealing with the local assessment of complaints about member conduct set out in the document attached as Appendix 7, and that this and any further documentation relating to the new ethical standards regime would be worked up and issued by the Monitoring Officer following consultation where appropriate with the members of the Committee.

Reason for decision

10.3 The Standards Committee (England) regulations 2008 requires that all Local Authorities have procedures and sub-committees in place to deal with any allegations of misconduct by Councillors.