

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 14 JULY, 2009 AT 4.00PM
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Betteridge, Mr. R. (Chairman)	} Independent Members
King Mr. M. (Vice Chairman)	

Bennett, Mrs. D.J.	Stretton, Mrs. P.Z.
Burnett, J.	Williams, A.
Holder, M.J.	

Pearson, A.	Hednesford Town Council
Williams, Mrs. P.	Rugeley Town Council
Allen, Mrs. M.	Cannock Wood Parish Council

Elliott, Mr. M.	Independent Member
Sindrey, G.	Independent Member

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. P.A. Ansell and D. Grice, Councillor D. Clarke (Norton Canes Parish Council), Councillor R. Todd (Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council) and Mrs. J. Chapman, Independent Member).

1. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December, 2008 be approved as a correct record.

2. Annual Report to the Standards Board for England for 2008/09

Consideration was given to the Annual Report to the Standards Board for England (Enclosure 4.1 – 4.7) of the Official Minutes of the Council.

It was agreed that the Chairman's Annual Report that had been presented to the full Council be available to the Independent Members and Parish/Town Councillors.

RESOLVED:

(A) That the Annual Report to the Standards Board for England for 2008/09 be noted.

- (B) That the Chairman's Annual Report be made available to Independent Members of the Standards Committee and Parish/Town Councillors.

3. Protocol for Confidential Protocol Information

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Monitoring Officer (Enclosure 5.1 – 5.20 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Following consideration of the report, Members were of the view the Protocol be amended to include examples of how Members should handle confidential information, particularly when sitting as Members of an Initial Assessment Panel and Standards Committee Hearings. It was also considered that the Protocol should use plain English and that it include a definition of confidentiality.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the Protocol for Confidential Information, set out at Annex 2 of the report, be amended to include:
 - (i) Examples of how Members should handle confidential information, particularly when sitting as Members of an Initial Assessment Panel and Standards Committee Hearings;
 - (ii) The use of plain English; and
 - (iii) A definition of confidentiality.
- (B) That subject to (C) and (D) below, the Protocol for Confidential Information, as amended, be forwarded to DMT and thereafter Council for approval.
- (C) That the Chairman of the Standards Committee, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, be authorised to make any amendments to the Protocol as considered appropriate having regard to any comments/amendments proposed by DMT.
- (D) That subject to any amendments made under (C) above, the Protocol be recommended to Council for adoption and be included within Part 5, Section 47: 'Codes and Protocols – Members' of the Council's Constitution.

4. Determination of the Work Programme of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2009/10

Consideration was given to the Work Programme for the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2009/10.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That an annual review be undertaken of all complaints received and dealt with by the Council in order to identify any possible unhealthy trends and/or procedural issues that may require consideration.

- (B) That an invite be extended to Parish/Town Councils to ascertain their needs in respect of training in respect of the Code of Conduct and Standards matters.
- (C) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in order to determine whether or not the name of the complainant should be included in the press notice (issued under Regulation 17 of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008) where a Councillor has been found not to be in breach of the Code of Conduct.
- (D) That the Work Programme for 2009/10 include:
 - (i) The development of a questionnaire in respect of standards complaints in order that Councillors and complainants can provide their comments/views as to the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints process.
 - (ii) A review of Member training and development.
 - (iii) A review of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol.
 - (iv) The development of a Code of Conduct, Register of Interests and Register of Gifts and Hospitality for Officers.
- (E) That the Standards Committee meeting scheduled for 18 August, 2009 be re-arranged to 8 September, 2009.

CHAIRMAN