

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER, 2009 AT 4.00PM
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

Ansell, Mrs. P.A.	Holder, M.J.
Burnett, J.	Williams, A.
Collis, C.	
Elliott, Mr. M.	Independent Member
Sindrey, G.	Independent Member
Pearson, A.	Hednesford Town Council
Todd, R.	Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council
Williams, Mrs. P.	Rugeley Town Council

(Apologies for absence were received from: Mrs. J. Chapman, Independent Member; Councillors Mrs. D.J. Bennett; and Mrs. P.Z. Stretton; Councillor Mrs. M. Allen (Cannock Wood Parish Council); Councillor K. Baker (Brindley Heath Parish Council); Councillor D. Clarke (Norton Canes Parish Council); Councillor P. Fisher (Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council); and Councillor E. Smith (Bridgtown Parish Council).

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman welcomed Mr. A. Welch, Head of Law and Administration, Stafford Borough Council, and Mr. P. Holmes, Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services to introduce themselves and outline their respective roles at the Council and, in particular, in relation to Standards matters.

Mr. Welch advised that he had been appointed to act as the Council's Monitoring Officer until such time as a final determination was made in respect of whether or not Legal and Democratic Services would form part of a shared service with Stafford B.C.

Mr. Holmes had been appointed as an Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services to provide day to day management of the service for an initial period of up to six months, or until the matter was otherwise resolved.

11. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

No declarations of interests were submitted.

12. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October, 2009 be approved as a correct record.

13. Monitoring Officer – Interim Arrangements

The Chairman referred Members to the introductory statements.

14. Feedback on Annual Assembly of Standards for England

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Principal Solicitor (Enclosure 5.1 – 5.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council). The Chairman sought Members' views and asked if there were any areas on which further clarification was required, in particular with regard to the new Code of Conduct to be implemented with effect from May, 2010.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the contents of the briefing note be noted.
- (B) That Members' training needs in respect of the new Code of Conduct should be considered at the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 4 February, 2009, following publication of the Code.
- (C) That, in the interim, any Members' who required general training / guidance in respect of their roles and responsibilities as members of the Standards Committee, or any other Committee or Other Body, should speak to the Monitoring Officer who would arrange for any necessary training.

15. Training Needs in Respect of the Code of Conduct and Standards Matters

This matter had been addressed as part of the discussions on Annual Assembly of Standards for England, and would be carried forward as an agenda item for the next meeting.

16. Exclusion of the Public

That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 Part 1, Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

17. Request for Exemption from Political Restrictions

Consideration was given to a report of the Monitoring Officer (Enclosure 8.1 – 8.15 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the application for exemption from political restriction be approved on the basis that the applicant's role did not involve either:
 - (i) giving advice on a regular basis to the Council, Committees, the Cabinet or to Cabinet Members; or
 - (ii) speaking on behalf of the Council on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters.
- (B) That the exemption of the political restriction on the post be given with immediate effect. However the Committee decided to place a time limit on the exemption of the political restriction on the post until the ordinary day for the retirement of Councillors in 2011 (which will be four days after the Election in 2011). A further application would be required at that time, if necessary.
- (C) That, if elected, the applicant would need to be aware of the limits on the decision made by the Standards Committee, as it related to his current post. If he obtained another politically restricted post with Cannock Chase District Council or any other Council then he would need to make a further application for an exemption from that restriction since the exemption applies to the specific post and not the individual.
- (D) That the applicant be advised that he was precluded by law from being a Councillor and Officer in the same Council.

CHAIRMAN