

AT A MEETING of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on 9 February 2010.

**PRESENT:**

Independent Chairman:

p Mr. M.C. James

Councillors:

a B. Dash

p A. Gibson

p D. Harrison (Standing Deputy)

p G. Hockley

a A. Rice

a J. West

p. S. Woodward

Independent Members:-

p Mr G. Ellis

**12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B. Dash, A. Rice and J. West. Councillor D. Harrison attended as Councillor Dash's standing deputy.

**13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**14 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Committee held on 30 November 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**(a) Matters arising**

**Minute 11 - Recruitment of Independent Members to Standards Committee and to the Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Committee were advised that the Sub-Committee appointed to assist in the recruitment of Independent Members to Standards Committee and the Independent Remuneration Panel had interviewed a number of candidates. The Sub-Committee's recommendations for appointment would be submitted to the County Council for its approval on 18 February 2010.

**15 COMPLAINT : MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT : REPORT FOLLOWING OTHER ACTION**

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer (Item 5

in the Minute Book).

The Committee were advised that the complaint against Councillor Frederick Allgood considered by a Standards Assessment Sub-Committee had directed 'Other Action'. This did not involve any finding of fact, nor did it involve reaching a decision about whether or not the Member had failed to comply with the Members Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer had been directed to arrange for Councillor Frederick Allgood to undertake training on the application of the Protocol for Individual Budgets for Hampshire County Councillors and this training had now been undertaken.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) It be noted that training for Councillors Allgood has been undertaken as directed by the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee and
- (ii) The Standards Committee confirms that it is satisfied with the actions described in the Monitoring Officer's report.

## 16 **PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE COMMITTEE**

The Monitoring Officer reminded the Committee that Standards Board for England guidance and Acts of Parliament that were relevant to the Committee's work came into force at different times. Heads of Service within the Chief Executive's Department therefore meet regularly to discuss potential areas of work needing to be drawn to the attention of the Standards Committee.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Regulations in respect of definitions of "politically restricted" post had recently changed. Appeals against designation of a post being 'politically restricted' would now come before the Standards Committee. Prior to the first appeal that was received, training would need to be arranged for Members of the Standards Committee.

Members indicated that they thought it was particularly important for Members who sat in a 'quasi judicial' capacity on behalf of the County Council to receive regular, up to date training. In this regard they referred specifically to Members of the Regulatory Committee. The need to avoid 'predetermination' and also the need to refrain from inappropriate public comment were felt to be of particular importance (and not purely in respect of Members of the Regulatory Committee sitting in a quasi judicial capacity).

Reference was made to the training material produced occasionally by the Standards Board for England. Members indicated that it was likely to be helpful for them to receive presentations from the Monitoring Officer, perhaps at the end of Standards Committee meetings, to keep

them appraised of relevant guidance. Such training presentations should be included on the formal agenda summons.

Members also felt it was important to continue to promote the role of the Standards Committee (possibly through pages of "Hampshire Now"). They felt that an annual report of the Standards Committee's activity could be presented to the County Council as part of efforts to publicise the Committee's work. Members agreed and asked the Monitoring Officer to produce a report for the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (i) The Monitoring Officer be asked to bring forward items of interest and arrange appropriate training for Members of the Standards Committee on an as and when basis (such training to potentially include an opportunity to view training videos produced by the Standards Board for England).
- (ii) The Monitoring Officer be instructed to produce an annual report on the Committee's work for submission to the next meeting (and also for submission to the County Council).
- (iii) Officers be instructed to explore the possibility of a short article appearing in a future edition of "Hampshire Now," explaining the role and functions of the Standards Committee.
- (iv) In seeking to arrange any training sessions, the Monitoring Officer give consideration to Members of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police Authority being invited to participate, if the matters the Standards Committee were to receive training on were also relevant to Members on the HFRA and the Hampshire Police Authority.
- (v) That the Monitoring Officer be instructed to bring a proposed work programme to the next meeting of the Committee, to incorporate a timetable for the above matters and the assessment of training requirements for both the Committee's own members and County Council members as a whole.