

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

*At a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday, 7 June 2006 at Runcorn Town Hall.*

Present: Councillors Collins (Chairman), Parker, Pearsall, Luxton and Parish  
Councillor Ronald Crawford

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Redhead, Lewis and Wharton

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: M. Simpson and J. Tradewell

Also in attendance: (none)

### ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

		<i>Action</i>
STC1	MINUTES	
	<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
STC2	STANDARDS BOARD INFORMATION ROUND UP	
	<p>The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy bringing Members up to date with the latest news from the Standards Board as outlined in Bulletin No. 27.</p> <p>It was noted that there was some good advice clarifying to the effect that were elected members simply have shared interest with their local community such interests would not in the normal course of events not be prejudicial.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the Islington case and the suggestion of having two Parish Councillors on the Standards Committee. It was noted that due to the proportions from an electorate point of view this would give a disproportionate strength in comparison as 25% of the</p>	

Committee had to comprise of independent members, therefore the Committee would not canvass Parish Councils for a member to join this Committee. However it was decided that the information be circulated to the Parish Councils in order to make them aware.

The Committee raised queries regarding the Case Alert information, payment of legal fees, who decides what was exempt information and reciprocal arrangements. It was noted that in most cases the Standards Committee would pay the legal fees. The Standards Committee was covered by the rules of access to information which was the same as other Committees and the Council would not be looking to have a reciprocal arrangement. In addition it was decided that the Council Solicitor would sign up to the Case Alerts and forward them on to members then should people no longer wish to receive them they should inform the Council Solicitor.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) a nominee be put forward to attend the Fifth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

Council Solicitor

### STC3 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER - MEMBERS INTERESTS

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining the process in place for cross-checking Members' declarations of interests at meetings with the Members' Register of Interests.

It was noted that over the past year the procedure had been carried out resulting in all Declaration of Interests relating back to the Register except one. The Committee commended these arrangements and requested that they be continued.

Concerns were raised regarding our progress on making contact with other authorities within Cheshire to ascertain if they have had a similar request from the Audit Commission to examine whether or not any systems were already in place. It was noted that there was a Cheshire Secretaries meeting this coming Friday and it would be brought up there.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;

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| (2) | the Committee confirm that the arrangements for cross checking declarations of interest with the Register of Interests meet with their approval; and  | Council Solicitor |
| (3) | follow up be made regarding STC13 - contact be made with other local authorities within Cheshire to ascertain if they have had similar request from the Audit Commission, to examine whether or not any systems are already in place and if comparative work can be carried out across the authorities. | Council Solicitor |

STC4 STANDARDS TRAINING PROGRAMME 2006/2007

The Committee considered a report seeking their views on the training that should be put in place for 2006/07 for members of the Council and the Committee. It was noted that Members had the opportunity, on the initial training course, which explained the code of conduct in reasonable detail. It was noted that Parish Councillors also had the opportunity to attend training sessions as they were invited at the same time. There was some ongoing training for Members and there was to be a training session for Members of the Committee on how local hearings should be conducted.

RESOLVED: That

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| (1) | the training on the Code of Conduct had been given to new members as part of the Induction process be noted;  | Council Solicitor |
| (2) | the Council Solicitor be asked to arrange a training seminar or seminars for all members of the Council (and new Members in particular) allowing members to explore the Code of Conduct in detail through the use of scenarios; and | Council Solicitor |
| (3) | the Council Solicitor be asked to arrange a training session for Members of the Committee on how local hearings should be conducted.  | Council Solicitor |

NB: At the conclusion of the meeting it was noted that Mr Collins (the Chairman) would be standing down as a member of this Committee. The Committee passed a vote of thanks to Mr Collins for all his hard work and efforts over the years. An advertisement would be placed inviting people to apply for a position on this Committee.

*Meeting ended at 3.50 p.m.*