

Standards Committee

Agenda

Date: Monday, 25th January, 2010
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach
CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos. 11 and 35 a total period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the Committee on any matter relevant to its work.

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned where there are a number of speakers. Members of the public are not required to give notice to use this facility. However, as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours' notice is encouraged.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at the meeting should provide three clear working days' notice, in writing, to enable an informed answer to be given.

Please contact
E-Mail:

Carol Jones on 01270 686471
carol.jones@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies or requests for further information or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2009.

5. **Pilot Compact Working Group**

The Vice-Chairman to report that owing to the current unavailability of the Chief Officer of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, the Pilot Compact Working Group has not met since 29th October 2009. It is expected that a meeting will be arranged in the near future with the aim of submitting the final report to the March meeting of the Committee.

6. **Website Update** (Pages 7 - 8)

At the previous meeting, Members expressed concern that the dedicated webpage "Councillor Conduct" could not be placed more prominently on the Council's website owing to both technical difficulties and the requirement to adhere to guidance on hierarchical navigation.

The Committee resolved that a request be submitted to ICT for this page to be included on the left-hand navigation page of the home page.

Members are asked to note that the "Councillor Conduct" page has now been added to the home page listed under "I want to....." in close proximity to the left-hand navigation pane. For ease of reference, a copy of the home page is attached.

7. **"Away-Day" - 11th December 2009** (Pages 9 - 24)

The Chairman to report on the "Away-Day" held on 11th December 2009.

(1) Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee were discussed and a separate report has been included as item 9 on this agenda.

(2) Planning Training

The issue of planning training for Members was raised in the context of Members' input into policy development, for example, the Local Development Framework. The Member Training Programme is currently being developed and, if required, arrangements can be made for a session which will focus on this aspect of planning.

In July 2009, Trevor Roberts Associates delivered an in-house planning session to Members of Cheshire East Council. Although this was principally related to planning enforcement, the topic of general planning was also covered. A copy of the programme for the event is enclosed.

On 15th February 2010 Members will be invited to attend an in-house planning training session which will focus on conservation matters, and later in the year a session on development control is planned.

At the conclusion of the March meeting of the Committee, a one-hour planning training session is to be delivered to the non-elected Members.

Each elected Member of the Council has already been provided with a "Development Management Member Pack" and copies of this will be available at the meeting for non-elected Members of the Committee.

(3) Complaints Form

The complaints form, based on guidance by Standards for England, has already been up-loaded onto the website. The Chairman has requested the inclusion of this item for review by Members of the Committee. A copy of the current complaints form is attached for consideration.

8. **Training for Members**

The Committee is asked to note that two training sessions for both Borough Councillors and town and parish councillors have been arranged on Wednesday, 10th February (Crewe) and Wednesday, 17th February (Macclesfield) respectively. The events, which will start at 6.00 pm, will consider matters relating to the Code of Conduct.

9. **Terms of Reference - Standards Committee** (Pages 25 - 56)

To consider the Monitoring Officer's report in respect of the Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee.

The report addresses the issue of whistle-blowing and anti-bullying; both policies are attached as appendices.

10. **Bulletin 46 - Standards for England** (Pages 57 - 68)

To receive for information No. 46 of The Bulletin issued by Standards for England.

11. **Conducting Local Assessment**

At the conclusion of the meeting, there will be an opportunity for Members to view a DVD issued by Standards for England. The DVD is scenario-based and shows the behaviour of councillors, which may breach the Code of Conduct, and how an Assessment Sub-Committee carries out an assessment.