

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Standards Committee**
held on Monday, 26th July, 2010 in Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Mr N Briers (Chairman)
Mr D Sayer (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rhoda Bailey, B Dykes, J Hammond, M Parsons, L Smetham,
Barnett and Eatough

Independent Members:

Mr I Clark and Mr M Garratt

Parish Representatives:

Mrs P Barnett and Mrs T Eatough

APOLOGIES:

Councillor M A Martin, Mr K Edwards and Mr R Pomlett

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr C Chapman	Monitoring Officer
Mrs H Gough	Customer Services Manager
Mr P Jones	Democratic Services Team Leader
Mrs C M Jones	Democratic Services Officer

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

11 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

There were no members of the public in attendance and the Committee, therefore, proceeded to its next business.

12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2010 be approved as a correct record.

13 PARTNERSHIPS PROTOCOL

Arising out of discussion of the minutes of the previous meeting, Members requested an update on the development of the Partnerships Protocol.

RESOLVED

That an update on development of the Partnerships Protocol be submitted to the next meeting.

14 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS

The Committee considered a report which provided a summary of complaints dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman in respect of Cheshire East Council for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

During discussion of the report, the issue of customer complaints in general was raised. An outline of the process was provided for Members, together with an indication of current performance compared with the previous period. Complaints, suggestions and compliments management information was collated on a monthly basis. A new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System was to be introduced in September 2010 and this would improve the capture of the monthly management information.

Members considered that it would be helpful to receive a report at each meeting on complaints/compliments generally, divided into the type of complaint, response rates for responding to complaints and whether or not they were satisfactorily resolved from the perspective of the complainant. The information would enable the Committee to detect emerging trends and highlight areas of concern.

RESOLVED

That a summary report on both Local Government Ombudsman complaints and customer complaints be submitted to each meeting of the Committee.

15 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The Committee was invited to identify any training needs. At the previous meeting, it had been suggested that Chairmen's training in respect of the process/procedures for the three Sub-Committees be undertaken. The possibility of joint training was being explored.

Basic planning training for Members of the Committee had also been suggested. The Planning Protocol was currently being reviewed and updated and in view of this, it may be appropriate for probity training to be arranged in November 2010.

RESOLVED:

That training events be arranged as appropriate.

16 THE FUTURE OF STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND AND IMPACT UPON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report on the current position regarding Standards for England and the implications for the Standards Committee.

Following the Parliamentary Election and the formation of the Coalition Government, it had been announced that the standards board regime, and as part of this, Standards for England, was to be abolished. The draft Bill "Decentralisation and Localism", which was expected to enact the abolition, had not yet been published. The date for abolition was unknown, but was expected to be later in the year or early in 2011.

During discussion of the implications for the Standards Committee, the Chairman suggested that the "Issues and Improvements Working Group" meet on Tuesday, 2 November at 2 pm to prepare a discussion paper for consideration at the November meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That

1. the report be noted; and
2. arrangements be made for a meeting of the "Issues and Improvements Working Group" on Tuesday, 2 November 2010.

17 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 7c of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing this information.

18 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Committee received a report about serving Cheshire East Councillors (Complaint Nos. CEC/10/02 and CEC10/03); a Town Councillor (Complaint No. CEC/10/04); and a report back in respect of Complaint No. CEC/10/01.

The complaints had been considered by an Assessment Sub-Committee on 13 July 2010 when the following action had been agreed –
CEC/10/01 Noted

CEC/10/02 Referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation
CEC/10/03 No action.
CEC/10/04 Referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation

During discussion of the terms of reference for the three Sub-Committees (1 – Assessment; 2 – Review; and 3 – Hearing) it was agreed that a report clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities be submitted to the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That

1. the report be received and noted; and
2. a report clarifying the role and responsibilities of the Standards Committee's three Sub-Committees be submitted to the next meeting.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.00 pm

Nigel Briers (Chairman)