

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee
held on Tuesday, 8th July, 2008
at the Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs R Bailey, B Dykes, J Hammond, Mrs M Hollins, Mrs M Martin, M Parsons and Mrs L Smetham

Apologies

Councillors J Goddard

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was reported that in order to comply with the Local Government Act 2000, and guidance from the Standards Board for England, the Standards Committee should have a Chairman who was an Independent Member. A Chairman was therefore appointed for the period prior to the recruitment of the Committee's Independent Members.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Lesley Smetham be appointed Chairman of the Cheshire East Standards Committee for this meeting and any subsequent meetings before the independent members are in post.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME/OPEN SESSION

No questions were received.

5 ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORK PROGRAMME OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the role and function of the Committee, and to those matters it would need to deal with in the period leading up to 1 April 2009. In addition a draft Work Programme was circulated at the meeting and this set out the main items to be dealt with each month.

RESOLVED

1. That the terms of reference be noted.
2. That the role of the Committee be noted in respect of Parish Councils in the period up to 1 April 2009.
3. That approval be given to the Work Programme circulated for the year 2008/2009.

6 RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT AND PARISH COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Consideration was given to the process for the recruitment of the Committee's Independent and Parish Council representatives. The report detailed the different recruitment options available and set out suggested job descriptions and person specifications for each; in considering these it was requested that the wording of each be looked at to ensure that the terminology between the two was consistent. It was anticipated that the interviews for the Independent Members would be carried out during August.

RESOLVED

1. That approval be given to recruit Independent Members from the existing pool of Borough, and County Council Independent members.
2. That the job description and person specification for Independent Members be approved.
3. That Councillors John Hammond, Mike Parsons and Lesley Smetham (Deputy Councillor Rhoda Bailey) be appointed to a Panel of Members of the Committee to interview and recommend the appointment of the Independent Members to the Committee and to the Shadow Council.
4. That the Cheshire Association of Local Councils be requested to conduct a nomination process for the recruitment of Parish Council representatives with one nomination coming from each of the three existing Districts.
5. That approval be given to the job description and person specification for the Parish Council representatives subject to the wording being brought into line with that for the Independent Members.

7 PROMOTION OF HIGH STANDARDS OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Consideration was given to the initial steps to be taken to promote high standards within Cheshire East Council and the associated training and awareness requirements.

The Committee agreed with the suggestion that the Governance Group be asked to offer detailed sessions on the Code of Conduct for all Cheshire East Councillors, and requested that Members be asked which aspects in particular they would like to be included in the training. In addition it was requested that sessions should be included on declarations of interest, whistle blowing/anti bullying. With particular reference to the Standards Committee it was requested that training be given on disciplinary procedures, to include case studies of a Standards Committee hearing, and training on face-to-face sessions.

RESOLVED

That the report be approved and that training sessions be arranged to include the items now detailed.

8 FUTURE MEETING DATES

It was noted that the meeting of the Committee programmed to be on 14 October 2008 clashed with the Standards Board for England's Annual meeting. It was therefore agreed that it be held instead on 7 October 2008, starting at 10.00 am.

RESOLVED

That the next meeting of the Committee be held on 7 October 2008 at 10.00 am.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.00 pm

CHAIRMAN