

**REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE ISSUES AND IMPROVEMENTS
WORKING PARTY held at Westfields, Sandbach on Tuesday 11th May
2010 at 10.00a.m.**

Present: Nigel Briers (Chair) David Sayer (Vice Chair) Cllr Mike Parsons,
Mike Garratt (Ind) Cllr Lesley Smetham Cllr Rhoda Bailey
Cllr Brian Dykes Cllr John Hammond Ian Clark (Ind) Teresa Eatough (Parish)

Officers in Attendance: Julie Openshaw (Dep Monitoring Officer) Paul
Jones (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Roger Pomlett (Ind)

1 Reports from Standards for England (S for E)

Discussion centred upon a proposal to extract on a regular basis reports on items of interest/relevance appearing on the S for E Website and Forum. Agreed that all members engage in this exercise and communicate findings via the Chair/Vice Chair. Following advice from Paul Jones any such 'reports' would be endorsed 'For Information Only' and included only in such part of any agenda as items not calling for decision making resolution.

2 Complaints Against Councillors

Vice Chair raised this question expressed succinctly "When, following receipt of a complaint against a named member, is that member notified that such a complaint has been lodged ?" It was clear that this issue has been discussed at length within S for E and the working party was advised of the Monitoring Officer's discretion in this regard. It was accepted that in the majority of instances the matter would be referred to the Assessment Sub Committee and thereafter the named member would be advised. In the small number of instances (thought to be as low as 5%) not referred to ASC the Monitoring Officer's discretion would prevail and it was not considered practicable to devise any exhaustive list of such instances but adviseable that they be dealt with on a case by case basis.

3 Regular Communications with Borough Councillors/Town and Parish Councillors/Council Staff and Members of the Public

The Working Party considered and discussed at some length the present available means of communication whereby the existence and function of the Standards Committee is brought to the attention of those persons it purports to serve and in appropriate cases to offer training and guidance.

It was accepted that with the large number (108) of Town and Parish Councils within Cheshire East, communication with individual councillors would be difficult and largely effected through Chairs and Clerks.

The Chair urged the Working Party to consider the introduction of a regular newsletter. This idea found favour with members present

4 Compact Pilot Evaluation Research Report

A substantial document (84 pages) was made available to the Chair and Vice Chair at this juncture. Vice Chair undertook to prepare and submit for consideration by the full Standards Committee at its meeting in July 2010 a resume of the principal findings.

5 Charter Trust

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised on this following a specific question which had been raised at the monthly Council Meeting which basically asked whether the Standards Committee would have regard to the Charter Trusts which presently existed in respect of the former boroughs of Macclesfield and Crewe. As in both instances the Charter Trust membership comprised elected members for the areas concerned then the answer was clear i.e. the Code of Conduct would apply and the Standards Committee would have due regard to the respective Trusts while in existence. A copy of the Charter Trust Regulations 2009 was made available.

6 Next Meeting

This would be determined following the full Standards Committee meeting scheduled for 24th May 2010

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