

Minutes of: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 2 March 2004

Present: Councillor J Smith (in the Chair);
 Councillors K S Briggs, C M Fitzgerald, J Grimshaw,
 D M Higgin and B Theckston.

Independent Members: Mrs A Brown, Mr A Loyns and Mr A Withington

Public Attendance: No members of the public attended the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor W J Davison

S.1288 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

S.1289 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

S.1290 MINUTES

Delegated decision:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2003 and the Special Meeting held on 22 October 2003 were approved and signed as correct records.

S.1291 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE

Delegated decision:

That the Minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee held on 24 February 2004 be noted.

S.1292 ENFORCING THE CODE OF CONDUCT LOCALLY – A SEMINAR FOR GREATER MANCHESTER AUTHORITIES

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which provided a summary of the main issues covered at a seminar organised for Greater Manchester Authorities entitled "Enforcing the Code of Conduct Locally."

The report set out the main issues and messages which emerged from the seminar and provided a summary of a mock hearing which took place and considered the case of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.

Delegated decision:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That at the next meeting of this Committee to be held on Wednesday 28 April 2004, a training exercise be organised for members of the Committee.

S.1293 CODE OF CONDUCT – REGISTER OF INTERESTS

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which informed Members of guidance from the Standards Board for England regarding the Register of Members' Interests and the inclusion of information relating to Membership of the Freemasons and Membership of Political Party Councillor Associations.

The Board has advised that membership of the Freemasons should be registered under the requirement to register Membership of bodies that were "directed to charitable purposes." Membership of Councillor Associations should also be registered as a body "whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy."

It was reported that this information would be included in the next Member Information Bulletin.

Delegated decision:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Standards Board be informed that more informed guidance should be provided as to what should be included in the register and as to why Membership of the Freemasons should be included.

S.1294 CODE OF CONDUCT – LOCAL DETERMINATION OF ALLEGATIONS – RECIPROCAL MONITORING OFFICER ARRANGEMENTS

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report which proposed reciprocal arrangements with the other Greater Manchester Councils for the provision of monitoring officer support in appropriate cases.

Delegated decision:

1. That approval be given for the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer appointed from time to time by each of the other Greater Manchester Councils to investigate or advise the Standards Committee in relation to any allegation referred by the Standards Board or Ethical Standards Officer for local investigation or determination, by arrangement with the Council's Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer, and that any officer undertaking such duties for or on behalf of the Council be indemnified to the same extent as an officer of the Council undertaking similar duties.

2. That the Council's Monitoring Officer and or Deputy Monitoring Officer be authorised to undertake such duties for any of the other Greater Manchester Councils and/or their Standards Committees.

J SMITH
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 7.45 pm)