

**Minutes of:** STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Date of Meeting:** 28 April 2004

**Present:** Councillor J Smith (in the Chair);  
Councillors K S Briggs, J Grimshaw and D M Higgin

**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:** Councillors W J Davison and B Theckston

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**S.1577 COUNCILLOR CONNIE FITZGERALD**

The Chair referred to the recent sad death of Councillor Fitzgerald who had been a member of this Committee. Members observed a short silence in her memory.

**S.1578 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

**S.1579 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

**S.1580 MINUTES**

**Delegated decision:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2004 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**S.1581 OMBUDSMAN REPORT – COMPLAINT 02/C/14188**

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which presented to Members a report of the Ombudsman in respect of a complaint against the Council.

It was reported that the complaint was in respect of inspection and registration services for adults, which were no longer provided by the Council, and the Ombudsman had found that the Complainant had suffered maladministration causing injustice.

In accordance with the requirements set out under Section 30 of the Local Government Act 1974 the necessary press announcements had been made and the report had been placed on deposit as required.

**It was agreed:**

1. That the report be noted.

2. That information be provided to a future meeting of this Committee on remedies put forward by the Ombudsman and how amounts of compensation were calculated.

**S.1582 OMBUDSMAN REPORT – COMPLAINT O2/C/0499C**

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which presented to Members a report of the Ombudsman in respect of a complaint against the Council.

It was reported that the complaint was in respect of a planning and drainage issue and the Ombudsman had found that the Complainant had suffered maladministration causing injustice.

In accordance with the requirements set out under Section 30 of the Local Government Act 1974 the necessary press announcements had been made and the report had been placed on deposit as required.

**It was agreed:**

That the report and the action taken by the Council in response to it be noted.

**S.1583 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – COMPLAINTS STATISTICS**

The report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which presented to Members statistics supplied by the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman supplied provisional statistics on complaints made against the Council which were to be used for two purposes:-

- The figures relating to complaints determined for 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 would be included in the Ombudsman's Annual Report on the 2003/2004 year.
- The full set of statistics would form an integral part of the Annual Letter to the Council which would be sent in June 2004.

**It was agreed:**

That the report be noted.

**S.1584 LOCAL INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS – PROPOSED RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON DRAFT REGULATIONS/GUIDANCE**

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which proposed a response to issues raised by the Draft Regulations and Guidance on Local Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct. The report contained proposed responses in respect of the following Key Issues in the consultation:-

- Criteria for reference for local investigation
- The scope of investigatory powers
- Reference back to the Standards Board

- The procedure for local hearings
- Confidentiality of Ethical Standards Officers reports
- 3 month time limit for hearings
- Seeking additional information
- Evidence of additional breaches
- Sanctions available to the Standards Committee
- Notification to the Standards Committee of reference for local investigation.

**It was agreed:**

That the proposed responses be approved and the Monitoring Officer be authorised to notify the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Standards Board for England of its views.

**S.1585 URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair allowed the following item to be dealt with as Urgent Business in order to enable a recommendation to go to Council at its Annual Meeting.

**Resignation of Independent Member**

It was reported that Mr James Lodge had resigned as an Independent Member of this Committee. Mr Lodge had been appointed for a two year period until May 2005. It was therefore recommended that the term of office of Ann Brown be extended by one year to May 2005 and that a replacement be sought for Mr Lodge.

**Recommendations:**

1. That the resignation of Mr Lodge be noted and he be thanked for his services as an Independent Member of this Committee.
2. That Ann Brown continue to serve as an Independent Member until May 2005, and that a replacement for Mr Lodge be sought through the usual recruitment process for Independent Members.

**S.1586 VOTE OF THANKS**

The Chair thanked Members for the contributions during the current Municipal Year and he in turn was thanked by Members for the way in which he had chaired meetings of this Committee.

**J SMITH**  
Chair

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 7.55 pm)**