

<b>Minutes of:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	1 March 2005
<b>Present:</b>	Councillor K S Briggs (in the Chair); Councillors K Audin, A J Garner, S P Magnall, J Smith and B Theckston
<b>Independent Members:</b>	Mr A Loyns, Mr K Wainwright and Mr A Withington
<b>Public Attendance:</b>	There were no members of the public in attendance at the meeting.
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	Councillor J Grimshaw and Mrs A Brown

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**S.1092      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

**S.1093      PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present to ask questions under this item.

**S.1094      MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**It was agreed:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2004 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**S.1095      PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER AND OFFICER RELATIONS**

A report by the Monitoring Officer was submitted which presented to Members for consideration a draft Protocol for Member and Officer relations.

It was reported that the document had been based on a model produced by the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS). The model had been produced in order to provide a Code which was consistent with a Council operating under Executive arrangements. As such, it was intended that the present Code would be replaced.

**It was agreed:**

1. That under paragraph 17, 'Correspondence', timescales and targets set out in the Customer Charter be incorporated.
2. That reports on the operation of the Code be submitted to this Committee on a six monthly basis in order to enable the Committee to monitor the Protocol in accordance with paragraph 3.2

3. The Protocol be referred to Group Leaders for consideration at political group meetings, who be asked to indicate whether they feel the section on Political Assistants should remain or be deleted from the document given the current position in Bury.
4. That the document be referred to the Joint Consultative Committee (Corporate) prior to submission to Council for approval.

**S.1096 CODE OF CONDUCT – LOCAL INVESTIGATION BY THE MONITORING OFFICER**

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which informed Members of the introduction of further regulations and guidance as to the local investigation and determination of allegations under the Code of Conduct for Members, and which proposed amendments to the procedure for the conduct of cases.

It was reported that not all referrals from the Ethical Standards Officer would require investigation as, under the Regulations, an Ethical Standards Officer could direct the Monitoring Officer to take some other form of action at local level. The report set out the stages at which the Standards Committee would be involved and drew attention to the sanctions which were now available to the Standards Committee, in addition to those provided under the 2003 Regulations.

**It was agreed:**

1. That the provisions of the Local Authority's (Code of Conduct) (Local Determination) (Amendment) (Regulations) 2004 with respect to the local investigation and/or determination of any matter referred to the Monitoring Officer under the Regulations, be noted.
2. That the amended procedure set out in Appendix 1 to the report be adopted with respect to the determination of any matter referred to by the Monitoring Officer under the Regulations.

**S.1097 STANDARDS BULLETIN – MARCH 2005**

The draft Standards Bulletin for March 2005 was submitted.

It was reported that additional information would be provided on the item 'Local Investigations' to take account of issues raised in the report to the Committee at this meeting, and that a section would be included on the proposed Protocol for Member/Officer relations.

**It was agreed:**

That the Standard Bulletin for March 2005 be noted and that the paragraph relating to the Member/Officer Protocol, should express the view that in the opinion of this Committee, relations between Members and Officers are very positive.

**S.1098 RAISING ETHICAL STANDARDS – WORKSHOP HELD IN BIRMINGHAM – 18 JANUARY 2005**

It was reported that the Improvement and Development Agency had organised a Conference in Birmingham on 18 January 2005 which involved a series of consultation workshops on Ethical Governance. The event had been attended by the Chair, together with Councillor Grimshaw, Mr Loyns and Mr Wainwright.

The Chair, Mr Loyns and Mr Wainwright each gave their view on the conference and what they had gained from it. The workshops centred around what was available to Local Authorities as a means of auditing their ethical framework policies.

**It was agreed:**

That the report be noted.

**S.1099 REVIEW OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND TRAINING**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services reported that the recently arranged training session on Standards had had to be cancelled due to the low number of Members who had subscribed to the event. It was intended to hold a session in the near future. It was also reported that the Code of Conduct for Members was to be the subject of review by the Standards Board and information produced by the Board was made available to Members. It was intended that this would be considered in conjunction with the training sessions.

**It was agreed:**

That the report be noted.

(Note: The Chair agreed to consider this matter under Urgent Business in order to inform Members of the position with regard to training and to ensure that feedback on the Code of Conduct for Members was available to meet the deadline of 17 June 2005.)

**S.1100 PLANNING PROTOCOL**

**It was agreed:**

That this item be withdrawn from the Agenda for this meeting.

**COUNCILLOR K S BRIGGS**

**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.05 pm)**