

<b>Minutes of:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	28 September 2006
<b>Present:</b>	Councillors K Audin, R C A Brown, D M Cassidy, D M Higgin and T Holt
<b>Independent Members:</b>	A Brown, A Loyns (In the Chair), K Wainwright and 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 F Walton (CI)

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#### **S.527 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

#### **S.528 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

#### **S.529 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

##### **Delegated Decision:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2006 be approved and signed as a correct record.

#### **S.530 HEARINGS PROCEDURES**

In accordance with Minute S.60 of the last meeting, Members were asked to consider the procedures relating to Hearing Panels.

It was reported that amendments had been made to the standard letter sent to a Councillor against whom a complaint had been made to indicate that requests for adjournments would only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.

##### **Delegated decision:**

That the information relating to Hearing Panels, including the amendment to the standard letter to Councillors, be approved.

#### **S.531 UPDATE ON CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS ON STANDARDS**

A copy of the Executive Summary of the survey of public attitude towards conducts in public life, carried out on behalf of the Committee on Standards in

Public Life, was submitted. The document provided information on the overall perceptions of standards in public life; levels of trust in public office holders; and public expectations and perceptions of standards. The Committee discussed some of the main features of the document.

The Monitoring Officer reported that at a recent meeting between Council Solicitors and representatives of the Standards Board, updates have been given regarding the production of a draft Model Code of Conduct and the filtering of complaints locally.

An updated draft Model Code of Conduct was expected in October of this year which would then be the subject of further consultation. It was anticipated that the new Code would be released in February 2007 with a later date of implementation.

A White Paper regarding a local framework for dealing with complaints was expected at the end of October. Members expressed concern at the possible resource implications of local filtering of complaints and felt that this was something which needed to be addressed and commented upon.

**Delegated decision:**

That the reports be noted.

**S.532 OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS WHO ARE APPOINTED BY THEIR AUTHORITY TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Guidance issued by the Monitoring Officer to assist Members in determining whether or not they had conflicts of interest when serving on Outside Bodies was submitted. In considering the document, acknowledgement was made that the Code of Conduct when updated would hopefully address some of the issues which Members faced. Members present felt that the guide provided sufficient information for them when considering their obligations to Outside Bodies and the requirements of the Code of Conduct.

**Delegated decision:**

That the report be noted.

**S.533 ETHICAL GOVERNANCE SURVEY**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a draft Ethical Standards Self Assessment Survey which it was intended to forward to all Councillors and a select number of Officers. The survey would provide evidence as to whether ethical standards within the Authority were of the level required.

Members asked if the categories of response could be looked at in order to simplify the form for those completing it.

**Delegated decision:**

That the Survey document be approved subject to the categories of response being the subject of further refinement.

**S.534 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

It was reported that the Working Group established by the former Performance Management Scrutiny Panel had now completed its report and findings into the complaints procedure. The findings had been reported to the Executive Members for Quality Council and Community Engagement and User Focus and it was now intended that a report and action plan would be referred to the Resource and Performance and Scrutiny Panel. This Committee would be informed of developments and a copy of the findings would be made available.

**Delegated decision:**

That the report be noted.

**A LOYNS  
Chair**

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

