

<b>Minutes of:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	29 May 2008
<b>Present:</b>	Councillors K S Briggs, R C A Brown, F Chaudhry, V D D'Albert, D M Higgin and M Wiseman.
<b>Independent Members:</b>	A Brown (in the Chair), A Loyns, 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 Y Creswell

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#### **S.50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

#### **S.51 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

#### **S.52 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

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

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2008 be approved and signed as a correct record.

#### **S.53 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER**

It was reported that Mr K Wainwright had been appointed to serve as an Independent Member until May 2012. It was also reported that Mr Wainwright would be this Committee's Independent Member representative on the Resource and Performance Scrutiny Commission and that Aidan Loyns would represent the Committee on the Audit Committee.

Following interviews for the position of Independent Member on 15 April 2008, with a Panel that included Councillors Bibby, Campbell and Davison, concern had been expressed that good candidates without previous experience of the work of the Standards Committee were at something of a disadvantage but should be encouraged to gain experience and, if they so desire, re-apply when the position of Independent Member becomes available. This would be particularly useful if a sitting Member had to resign during the course of the Municipal Year.

**Delegated decision:**

1. That the following steps be undertaken to assist candidates for the post of Standards Committee Independent Member to become more knowledgeable of the work of the Committee:-
  - w Training opportunities
  - w Briefing sessions prior to interviews
  - w Information on how to access to agendas and minutes
  - w Attendance at meetings of the Committee as a member of the public
2. That the matter be raised through the Independent Member's Forum.

**S.54 PROCEDURE FOR THE DETERMINATION OF ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE PERSONAL CONDUCT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

A draft document was submitted which contained procedures for dealing with complaints made regarding the personal conduct of Council Members and which had been drawn up in light of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 which allowed for local assessment of allegations about the conduct of Councillors.

Members were also asked to consider a draft "Bury's Rough Guide to Standards" which was intended as a document for members of the public with no knowledge of Standards and which could be made available on the Council's website.

**Delegated Decisions:**

1. That comments outside of those made at the meeting be forwarded to Democratic Services by close of business on Monday, 2 June 2008.
2. That the following be incorporated within the document:-
  - w The incorporation of deadlines relating to each of the stages within the process
  - w Reference to selection of Members to serve on the Sub-Committees by the Chair of the Standards Committee
3. The wording of the document be subject to further review with a view to the use of "plain English" and a flow chart be produced to accompany the document.

**S.55 TRAINING**

It was reported that training to be organised by AGMA would now take place in Blackburn on 25 June 2008 and in Oldham on Thursday, 3 July 2008. Members wishing to attend should notify Democratic Services so that places can be booked. It was also intended to organise training amongst Members of the Committee in conjunction with the next meeting.

**Delegated decision:**

That the report be noted.

**S.56 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – PROVISIONAL COMPLAINT STATISTICS**

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted which presented statistics supplied by the Ombudsman for Bury for 2007/2008. It was reported that the information contained in the report would be reproduced in the Annual Report of the Ombudsman which would include comparative information with other authorities.

**Delegated decision:**

That the report be noted and further information on the high number of complaints received under the category "Housing" and decisions made under the category "Premature complaints" be the subject of further investigation at the next meeting.

**S.57 STANDARDS ISSUES**

The Chair asked that where Members wished to raise issues, that if possible notice be given prior to the meeting.

**A BROWN**  
Chair

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