

Minutes of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	21 August 2008
Present:	Councillors R C A Brown, F Chaudhry, Y Creswell, V D D'Albert, D M Higgin and M Wiseman.
Independent Members:	A Brown (in the Chair), A Loyns, K Wainwright and A Withington
Public Attendance:	There was one member of the public in attendance at the meeting.
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor K S Briggs

S.222 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

S.223 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mr D Gremson asked how widely the work of the Committee was publicised.

Reference was made to public notices and information on the Council's website which had brought to people's attention the changes which had taken place with regard to local filtering. The Committee accepted that this was an area which needed to be addressed in terms of raising the Committee's profile. It was also suggested that the Committee could seek to use 'Our Voice' and the Local Area Partnerships to this end.

S.224 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Delegated decision:

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 29 May 2008 be approved and signed as a correct record.

S.225 DETERMINATION OF ALLEGATIONS – REVISED DOCUMENTS

Following recent meetings of the Standards Referrals Sub-Committee, the procedure for the determination of allegations about the personal conduct of Council Members had been amended and Members were asked to make any comments on its content. In addition, a complaint form had now been drafted and it was intended that this should be used for all future complaints against Members of the Council.

Delegated decisions:

1. That the procedure for the determination of allegations about the personal conduct of Council Members be approved subject to the inclusion of the following:-
 - Complainants be advised as to the need for confidentiality during the process and on the need to ensure that the only person who sees and receives a copy of their complaint is the Monitoring Officer.
 - Paragraph 5.0 of Appendix 1 be amended to make the recommended length of time which has elapsed 4 months instead of 6 months.
2. That training be arranged for all Members of the Council to raise awareness of the procedures, with more in-depth training for Members of this Committee.
3. That the draft complaint form be approved.

S.226 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – COMPLAINT STATISTICS FOR 2007/2008

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report in response to a request at the last meeting following consideration of provisional complaint statistics supplied by the Ombudsman.

In particular, a breakdown was provided on complaints received under the category 'Housing' and also a breakdown was provided in terms of premature complaints against service area.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

S.227 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Delegated decision:

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business since it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information.

**S.228 OUTCOME OF RECENT MEETINGS OF THE STANDARDS REFERRAL
(E) SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee discussed issues arising from the recent meetings of the Standards Referral Sub-Committee.

Delegated decision:

That a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to Political Group Leaders reminding Members of the new procedures for dealing with complaints against Elected Members and the responsibility of Members to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

A BROWN
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.50 pm)