

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Standards Committee held on Monday 24 November 2008 at 2.30 pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

(NB These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting.)

Present

Councillors Donna Jones
Simon Boshier
Paula Riches
Darron Phillips

Independent Members

John Wood
Peter Wyles
Peter Parham (in the Chair)

Officers

Fiona White, Head of Democratic & Community
Engagement
Jan Paterson, Assistant Head of HR, Recruitment,
Learning and Development
Ian Clark, Solicitor

62 Apologies for Absence (

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Andrew Mackay, Southsea Town Councillors David Yates and Peter Eddis and Portsmouth City Councillor Alistair Thompson.

63 Declaration of Members' Interests in accordance with Standing Order 14

There were no declarations of interest.

64 Revised Scrutiny Arrangements

The committee considered the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix 4 of the report from the Head of Democratic & Community Engagement. The Head of Democratic and Community Engagement explained to the committee that following extensive consultation with Members, it was agreed that the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix 4 would be revised for the sake of clarity. In response to questions the committee heard that -

- the content of Appendix 4 is essentially the same but has been presented slightly differently;

- confirmation was given by the Head of Democratic & Community Engagement that it is still open to the Governance & Audit Committee to refer matters to a Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Jim Patey, Chair of the Oversight Panel, was invited by the Chair of the Standards Committee to add any comments he wished to make. Councillor Patey reiterated that the changes to Appendix 4, Terms of Reference had been made to aid understanding and clarity.

RESOLVED that the committee unanimously agree the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the scrutiny panels (as supported by Oversight Panel at their meeting on 6 November) contained in the revised Appendix 4 of the report from the Head of Democratic & Community Engagement entitled “Revised Scrutiny Arrangements.”

65 Verbal Update on Councillors’ CRB Disclosures from the Assistant Head of Human Resources (AI 4)

The committee received a verbal update on the latest situation concerning the completion of CRB forms in respect of Portsmouth City Councillors. The committee heard that of the 22 CRB forms which had been outstanding, 16 forms have now been completed and returned and a further two would be completed by the end of today. This left four CRB forms outstanding. Members were advised that one Member is on holiday and of the three remaining Members, they have all collected forms and these were being chased for regularly.

In response to questions, the committee heard

- that the turn around time between the forms being completed and sent off and approval being received is approximately 10 days.
- The two Members of the Standards Committee who are Southsea Town Councillors have returned their forms and these are now in the process of completion.
- It was confirmed that all CRB checks for all Portsmouth City Councillors are enhanced CRB checks.

The Committee agreed that the Chair should send a letter to Southsea Town Councillors suggesting that their entire membership should all be CRB checked and not just those sitting on this Committee. The Committee agreed that the letter would be sent after the 25 November Council meeting.

Mr Wyles asked that a suggested protocol for sub-committee meetings of the Standards Committee should be circulated (which was done) for discussion and decision at a future meeting.

The Committee heard that although the next official meeting date is 9 March 2009, there may well be an extra meeting to consider the results of the Constitution Working Party’s deliberations and that this is likely to be some time in January.

Meeting ended at 3.05 pm.

VJP/EH
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