

Decision Summary

Committee: Standards Committee
Date: 30 September 2009
Committee Clerk: Adrian Johnson
Tel: 01484 221000

Chair

David Paul Sheard

Councillors Attended

Derek John Hardcastle, Nigel Patrick, David Ridgway, Christine M L Smith, Ken Smith

Co-opted Members

Mr P Blythe (Chair) (Independent Member)
Mr D J Binns (Independent Member)
Councillor C Kaye (Holme Valley Parish Council)
Councillor M Barlow (Denby Dale Parish Council)
Rev M Roberts (Independent Member)
Prof A Kitson (Independent Member)
Councillor P Cunnington (Kirkburton Parish Council)

1. Minutes of previous meeting

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 July 2009.

Decision: Approved as a correct record.

2. Interests

The Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda about which they might have a personal interest which prevents them from taking part in the discussions. They could be financial or some other reason. A form is attached for completion by Councillors if they have an interest in any of the items to be discussed at the meeting. Please complete this form and return it to the Committee Officer at the end of the meeting.

Decision: No interests were declared.

3. Admission of the public

Most debates take place in public. This only changes when there is a need to consider certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual. You will be told at this point whether there are any items on the Agenda which are to be discussed in private.

Decision: Determined that all the business be considered in public.

4. Deputations / Petitions

The Committee will receive any petitions and hear any deputations from members of the public.

A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also hand in a petition at the meeting but that petition should relate to something on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

Decision: None received.

5. Public question time

The Committee will hear any questions from the general public.

Decision: A question was asked about the role and remit of the Committee, and how a member of the public would go about making complaints against Members and Officers of the Authority.

The Chair replied.

6. Annual Report of Internal Audit 2008/2009

To receive a presentation on the activity of Internal Audit (to year end 31 March 2009).

Contact: Martin Dearnley 01484 221133

Decision: (1) Noted the report.
(2) Agreed that, in future, rather than presenting the General Audit Report to the Committee, a report containing aspects more specifically related to the remit of the Committee be submitted.

7. Standards Committees - Annual Assembly

To give consideration to the forthcoming Standards Committees Annual Assembly.

Contact: Dermot Pearson 01484 221437

Decision: (1) That the following be raised at the Assembly meeting:

- Concerns around length of time to conclude investigations/outcomes for Standards proceedings, to include scope for shortening the process where the Monitoring Officer has recommended no further action.
- Experience of other Standards Committees who have concluded Determination Hearings.
- Potential Government assistance to Local Authorities to offset their costs on investigations, to free up bringing in external investigators to speed up the process.
- Sources of advice available to Members facing Standards complaints and the lack of public funding available to support their costs.

(2) That any other issues for inclusion be emailed to the Chair/Monitoring Officer ahead of the Annual Assembly.

(3) That the issue of indemnity for Members facing Standards proceedings be discussed at the next meeting, with information on the outcome of research on the approaches of other Authorities' Standards Committees.

8. Granting of Dispensations

To give consideration to guidance on the granting of dispensations.

Contact: Dermot Pearson 01484 221437

Decision: (1) That the submitted report be circulated to all Members, Co-opted Members with voting rights, and Local Parish and Town Council Clerks.

(2) That the Council be recommended to establish a Dispensations Sub-Committee to determine applications for dispensations and, where possible, such Sub-Committees comprise an independent member as Chair and have a Parish Councillor where the application is from a Parish Councillor.

9. Adjudication Panel for England Decisions

To receive details of recent decisions of the Adjudication Panel for England.

Contact: Dermot Pearson 01484 221437

Decision: Noted the report.

10. Review of Monitoring Officer Protocol

To receive details on the Annual Review of Monitoring Officer Protocol.

Contact: Dermot Pearson 01484 221437

Decision: Noted the report.