

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Thursday, 24 June 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.04 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Ms A Griffiths – in the Chair

Dr N Alphey  
Councillor Mike Badcock  
Councillor Norman Bolster  
Councillor Ann Bonner  
Councillor Roy Darke  
Councillor Mrs Catherine Fulljames  
Councillor Roz Smith  
Professor M Dean  
Mr M Greenwood

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Mr P Clark (County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer) and  
Ms M Holyman (Corporate Core)  
Part of meeting Mr G Watson (Corporate Core)

*The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with the following additional document (Item 10 – Supplementary Report) and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and additional document, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.*

### **40/10 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2010/11 COUNCIL YEAR**

(Agenda No. 1)

**RESOLVED:** that Ann Griffiths be elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2010/11 Council Year.

### **41/10 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2010/11 COUNCIL YEAR**

(Agenda No. 2)

**RESOLVED:** that Nina Alphey be elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the 2010/11 Council Year.

### **42/10 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 5)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 December 2009 were approved and signed.

On Minute 32/09 (Minutes - Indemnity and Insurance for Members), Mr Clark reported that he had issued indemnity for members when sitting on outside bodies.

On Minute 34/09 ('Bringing Standards into Focus' – Annual Assembly of Standards Committees 2009), Dr Alphey reported that the cost of members/officers attending the Annual Assembly had been circulated to members after the last meeting.

On Minute 38/09 (Training Session on Assessments, Reviews, Hearings and Determinations), Ms Griffiths reported that the session had had to be postponed from 14 January 2010 to 4 March 2010, due to bad weather.

#### 43/10 SUBORDINATE BODIES

(Agenda No. 7)

The Committee was advised that four subordinate bodies fell within the responsibility of the Committee.

**RESOLVED:** to note that the following existing subordinate bodies fell within the responsibility of this Committee but appointments to them were not needed at the present time.

Initial Assessment Panel	Two Councillors and one independent member of the Committee (drawn from the membership of the Committee)
Review Panel	Two Councillors and one independent member of the Committee (drawn from the membership of the Committee)
Hearings Panel	Two Councillor members of the Committee and one independent member of the Committee (may comprise more than three members of the Committee, up to and including the whole membership of the Committee)
Dispensations Sub-Committee	Membership to be a minimum of three members of the Committee (including one independent member of the Committee)

#### 44/10 MONITORING OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee considered a report (ST8) which summarised progress and developments on governance and conduct issues over the past year. It also included a review of how the Committee had fulfilled its responsibilities with examples of good practice and compliance.

Mr Clark drew attention to the following additions/corrections to the report:

- On paragraph 29, Dr Alphey had attended the induction day for new members as a representative of the Standards Committee.
- On paragraph 36, the Review Panel had found a breach on one issue but had agreed that it did not warrant further action.

On the section on Politically Restricted Posts, Mr Watson agreed to send the policy and set of frequently asked questions to all members of the Committee.

**RESOLVED:** to endorse the report as amended and the work programme for 2010/11, subject to deleting item 13 as the annual Standards for England Assembly, due to have taken place this autumn, had been cancelled.

#### **45/10 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE 2009/10**

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee considered a report (ST9) which summarised the work of the Committee over the last year.

Ms Griffiths reported that the member who had been the subject of complaints, as mentioned in the report, had been named at the Council meeting. The name of the member and the papers were confidential and a breach of security had occurred. Mr Clark had spoken to the councillor who had disclosed the information at the meeting and the councillor had apologised. He had also written to the members of the Committee who had served on the Initial Assessment and Review Panels advising them that the papers were confidential and that disclosing any of the information was not appropriate.

In response to an enquiry about whether it was known who had leaked the information, Councillor Darke reported that he had disclosed the name but no details of the cases.

With regard to pages about the Standards Committee on the Council's website, Mr Watson reported that there had been 100 visits to the site which had gone live at the end of March/early April. The Standards Committee's webpages had been promoted on the front page of the internet site at the launch together with relevant links and it might be possible to book this again if the Committee wished.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report, to ask that the front page of the internet site be booked for promoting the Committee's web pages and role when elections were next due to be held and to thank Mr Watson for his work in developing the site.

#### **46/10 CRIMINAL RECORDS AND VETTING AND BARRING SCHEME CHECKS FOR COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee had before it reports (ST10 and ST10 – Supplement) which considered the implications for councillors and co-opted members of the requirements of the Criminal Records Bureau and Vetting and Barring Scheme. The Committee was advised that the coalition Government had announced its intention to review the Vetting and Barring Scheme.

**RESOLVED:** to agree to defer consideration of the report and supplementary report and to ask the Head of Legal & Democratic Services to submit a report on the Vetting and Barring Scheme once the coalition Government's intentions were known and to update the work programme accordingly.

#### **47/10 LOCAL FORUM OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

(Agenda No. 11)

The Committee was advised that it had been agreed to set up an Oxfordshire Forum of chairmen and deputy chairmen of Oxfordshire's standards committees for the sharing of common issues and good practice and its first meeting was due to be held on 9 July 2010.

Ms Griffiths suggested that the first meeting of the Oxfordshire Forum be postponed pending decisions by the Government on its proposals for the local government standards regime.

**RESOLVED:** to postpone the meeting of the Oxfordshire Forum of chairmen and deputy chairmen of Oxfordshire's standards committees pending decisions by the Government on its proposals for the local government standards regime.

#### **48/10 ATTENDANCE AT AND REVIEW OF MEETINGS**

(Agenda No. 12)

The Committee considered whether they wished to attend meetings of the Authority to observe conduct at meetings.

**RESOLVED:** to note that members of the Committee would decide on an individual basis whether they wished to attend meetings of the Authority.

#### **49/10 STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND - ANNUAL ASSEMBLY - 18 AND 19 OCTOBER 2010**

(Agenda No. 13)

The Committee was advised that the Standards for England had cancelled its Annual Assembly for 2010.

**RESOLVED:** to note the position.

#### **50/10 CASE REVIEW 2010**

(Agenda No. 14)

ST6

The Monitoring Officer presented a case example from Standards for England which the Committee considered.

**RESOLVED:** to note the case example considered.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....