

# **STANDARDS COMMITTEE AGENDA**

**Tuesday 12 April 2011 at 5.30 pm at the  
Council Chamber, West Somerset House, Williton**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2011 – **SEE ATTACHED.**

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive and record any declarations of interest in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

4. **Public Participation**

The Chairman to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public wishing to speak at this meeting there are a few points you might like to note.

A three-minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue. There will be no further opportunity for comment at a later stage. Your comments should be addressed to the Chairman and any ruling made by the Chair is not open to discussion. If a response is needed it will be given either orally at the meeting or a written reply made within five working days of the meeting.

5. **Parish/Town Council Representation on Standards Committee**

The Monitoring Officer to report that the normal practice has been for an election process to be undertaken following local Parish and Town Council elections to elect the three Parish/Town Council representatives on the Standards Committee.

As Members are aware, elections are due on 5 May 2011, but given the Government's intention to abolish the current Standards arrangements within the next 12 months or so, it would seem sensible to consider a pragmatic approach in this particular instance.

The Somerset Monitoring Officers discussed this issue at a recent meeting when it was agreed as follows –

1. That where it met local aspirations, serving Parish/Town Council representatives who were prepared to continue and duly got re-elected, be permitted to stay on the Committee for at least a transitional period until any new voluntary standards regime was established;

2. To cover for the eventuality of at least one existing such Member not being prepared or able to continue in accordance with 1. above, appropriate local arrangements be put in place to seek expressions of interest to fill any gaps as soon as possible to make the necessary temporary appointments following the receipt of any expressions of interest.

In the event of the Committee being comfortable with this approach, it is suggested that the Monitoring Officer liaises with Peter Lacey of the Somerset Association of Local Councils to establish a process for obtaining expressions of interest and involve the Chairman of the Committee in the making of any necessary, temporary appointments.

#### **6. Annual Report of Standards Committee – 2010/11**

To consider Report No. WSC 66/11, to be presented by Bruce Lang, Monitoring Officer – **SEE ATTACHED.**

The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with the opportunity of agreeing an Annual Report for 2010/2011.

#### **7. Monitoring Officers Update**

To consider a progress report from Bruce Lang, Monitoring Officer, on activities undertaken since the last meeting – **SEE ATTACHED.**

#### **8. Standards Committee Work Programme**

To update the Work Programme for the Committee – **SEE ATTACHED.**

#### **9. Arrangements for Future Meetings**

The Monitoring Officer reported that the Council had reviewed its arrangements for future meetings in respect of the 2011/12 Municipal Year and had produced a timetable which included quarterly Standards Committee meetings commencing at 4.30 pm on the following dates –

14 June 2011  
13 September 2011  
13 December 2011  
13 March 2012

#### **10. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To consider excluding the press and public during consideration of Item 11 on the grounds that, if the press and public were present during this item, there would be likely to be a disclosure to them of exempt information of the class specified in Paragraph 7C of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended as follows:

The deliberations of a Standards Committee or a Sub-Committee established under the provisions of Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000 in reaching any finding on a matter referred under the provisions of Section 60(2) or (3), 64(2), 70(4) or (5) or 71(2) of the Act should be considered under the exclusion of the press and public.

**11. Local Investigation – Reference WSLA18**

To consider Report No. WSC 27/11, prepared by Bruce Lang, Monitoring Officer – **SEE ATTACHED.**

The purpose of the report is to consider the outcome of a local investigation following the decision of the Referral Panel held on 8 November 2010.