



Members of the Standards Advisory Committee:

Mr T Evans, Mr I Gunn, Mr J Gamlin
Cllrs J Davis, Mrs S O de Renzy-Martin, J Fulwell,
P H Murphy, K H Turner & D J Westcott
Independent Person: Louise Somerville Williams

SAC/BL/kk

Mr Lang
Tel: 01984 635200
Email: bdlang@westsomerset.gov.uk

1 December 2014

**THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THE MEETING
THIS DOCUMENT CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT, BRAILLE, TAPE
FORMAT OR IN OTHER LANGUAGES ON REQUEST**

Dear Sir/Madam

I hereby give you notice to attend the following meeting:

STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 9 December 2014
Time: 4.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, West Somerset House, Williton

Please note that this meeting may be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy.

Therefore unless you advise otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact Committee Services on 01643 703704.

Yours faithfully

BRUCE LANG
Proper Officer

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL
West Somerset House Killick Way Williton Taunton TA4 4QA
T 01643 703704 F 01984 633022 DX 117701 WILLITON
E customerservices@westsomerset.gov.uk W www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk

RISK SCORING MATRIX

Report writers score risks in reports uses the scoring matrix below

Risk Scoring Matrix							
Likelihood (Probability)	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact (Consequences)							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

- Mitigating actions for high ('High' or above) scoring risks are to be reflected in Service Plans, managed by the Group Manager and implemented by Service Lead Officers;
- Lower scoring risks will either be accepted with no mitigating actions or included in work plans with appropriate mitigating actions that are managed by Service Lead Officers.

STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

**Tuesday 9 December 2014 at 4.30 pm at the
Council Chamber, West Somerset House, Williton**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Welcome and Introductions**

3. **Minutes**

To note the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee held on 23 September 2014 – **SEE ATTACHED**

4. **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.

5. **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.

6. **Review of the Standards Regime**

Verbal update as to the current situation by the Monitoring Officer.

7. **Training for Councillors following the Local Government Elections in May 2015**

A copy of the Induction Programme planned before the last Elections in 2011 are attached for information and comment.

8. Proposed Social Media Policy and Recording of Meetings Protocol

Verbal update from the Monitoring Officer.

9. Monitoring Officer's Update

To consider a verbal update from the Monitoring Officer on activities undertaken since the last meeting of the Committee.

10. Date of Future Meeting

3 March 2015 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, West Somerset House

Note: other 'meetings' of the Standards Advisory Committee may be convened to act as consultee with the Monitoring Officer when undertaking an initial assessment in response to the receipt of any formal complaints relating to allegations of a breach of a Code of Conduct.

The Council's Corporate Priorities:

- Local Democracy:
Securing local democracy and accountability in West Somerset, based in West Somerset, elected by the people of West Somerset and responsible to the people of West Somerset.

- New Nuclear Development at Hinkley Point
Maximising opportunities for West Somerset communities and businesses to benefit from the development whilst protecting local communities and the environment.

The Council's Core Values:

- Integrity
- Respect
- Fairness
- Trust

STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 September 2014 at 4.30 pm

Present:

Mr T EvansChairman

Councillor J Davis
Mr J Gamlin
Councillor K Turner

Councillor J Fulwell
Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor D J Westcott

Officers in Attendance

Monitoring Officer (B Lang)

Meeting Administrator (R Bryant)

SA1 Apology for Absence

Mr I Gunn.

SA2 Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED that Mr T Evans be appointed Chairman of the Standards Advisory Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

SA3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Mr I Gunn be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Standards Advisory Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

SA4 Minutes

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Committee held on 24 September 2013 – circulated with the Agenda. These minutes were adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 20 November 2013.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Standards Advisory Committee held on 24 September 2013, be confirmed as a correct record.

SA5 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

SA6 Public Participation

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the Agenda.

SA7 Overview of Standards Regime

(Report No. WSC 125/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of how the standards regime currently operated at WSC in comparison with the processes in place at TDBC to enable a discussion as to how best to work together going forward.

The Monitoring Officer stated that both TDBC and WSC had retained Committees to oversee the standards regime following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011.

These Committees had broadly the same purpose in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by district/borough, town and parish elected Members and co-opted members of Councils in their respective areas.

There were nevertheless distinct differences in the composition of the two committees.

At TDBC there were five voting Councillors (politically proportional) together with three co-opted independent members and two co-opted parish councillors as observers. The Committee could therefore make its own decisions notwithstanding that by its very nature, the Committee could be considered to be “political”.

In contrast, WSC had retained a Committee with a composition similar to before the Localism Act, consisting of three independent members (one of whom is Chairman), three WSC Councillors (politically balanced) and three parish councillors. All nine members could vote but, to ensure that this complied with current legislation, the Committee could only make recommendations to West Somerset’ Full Council.

The WSC version did maintain, or at least the perception, of a greater “independence” by having a majority of non-Councillors sitting on it who all had an equal voice. This did however result in some of the processes being more elongated by virtue of the Committee only being “advisory”.

In terms of cost, the only additional expense for TDBC was the payment of an annual allowance of £500 plus expenses for the Independent Person whereas at WSC additional payments were made to the six co-opted members (with a further allowance for the Chairman) which resulted in the total cost of just over £5300 per annum.

Reported that there were many similarities between the two processes, as well as some differences too including how the initial assessment of

complaints was undertaken and how each authority determined complaints at a formal hearing.

Although it was not intended to draw any conclusions as to which of the options were the “best”; given the closer working between the two Councils there could be some value in exploring whether there were any areas of mutual benefit to be gained from working in a similar way. An informal discussion between the respective Chairmen of the TDBC and WSC Standards Committees had already taken place to explore possible closer working.

Further reported that TDBC’s Standards Committee had subsequently requested a review of the current arrangements that it was currently working to with a view to making recommendations that would enable the parish and co-opted members to more fully participate in the process than they were able to do currently.

During the discussion of this item, the following comments were made:-

- Although it was acknowledged that it would make sense ultimately for one Standards Advisory Committee to serve both Councils, it was felt that it was far too soon to move this idea forward. There was a need to learn more about each Council first;
- It was widely felt by the public in West Somerset that its Standards Advisory Committee had retained its independence since the introduction of the Localism Act;
- It was important that anyone who submitted a complaint against a Councillor was left with the impression they had been treated fairly;
- In view of the situation at TDBC, should the payment of allowances to the WSC independent members be reviewed?
- Pleased to see TDBC moving towards a similar Standards Regime as the one at WSC. If agreed, there would be scope for both Councils to work together on things such as training;
- With regard to allowances, did the Committee wish to provide any advice to WSC’s Remuneration Panel?
- The independent members deserved an allowance in recognition of their time commitment to the work of the Standards Committee;
- Leave the Remuneration Panel to consider the subject of allowances. If they stayed in being, individual members could then decide whether they wished to continue to receive payment or not.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) The report be noted; and
- (2) The two Standards Committees be encouraged to continue discussions to explore ways of working together going forward that might be of mutual benefit to both authorities.

SA8 **Monitoring Officer's Update**

The Monitoring Officer reported that there had been several approaches from Parish Councils seeking advice on planning matters which potentially could lead to Code of Conduct issues arising.

It was felt that wherever possible guidance should be provided to help the Parish Councillors find their own solutions to potential problems.

With regard to an issue raised earlier about procedure that would follow the non-declaration of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, the Monitoring Officer stated that an allegation of non-disclosure would firstly be considered by the Council.

If it appeared that the requirements of the Code of Conduct had not been adhered to, the details would be forwarded to the Police for them to decide whether formal action should be taken.

RESOLVED that the Monitoring Officer's update be noted.

SA9 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee was scheduled for Tuesday, 9 December 2014 at 4.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 5.35 p.m.



**AN INDUCTION
FOR ALL NEW MEMBERS (COUNCILLORS)**

**Monday, 9 May 2011
Council Chamber, West Somerset Council
Williton**

9.30 am

Session	Topic and Content	Facilitators
9.30 am	Sign Declaration of Acceptance of office and have photograph taken	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director Helen Dobson, PA/Member Support
10.00 am	Introduction and Welcome by the Corporate Director and the Corporate Management Team	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director Wendy Bass, Group Manager Graham Carne, Group Manager Ian Timms, Group Manager Steve Watts, Group Manager
10.15 am	The Induction and Development Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for new members (including Information Pack) • Members' Allowances • Members' IT and security arrangements (key fobs) • Car parking passes 	Wendy Bass, Group Manager – Corporate Services Karen Penfold, IS Manager
10.45 am	The Constitution, Code of Conduct, and the Committee Structure	Bruce Lang, Corporate Director Wendy Bass, Group Manager - Corporate Services
11.15 am	COFFEE BREAK	
11.30 am	The Council's Objectives, the Corporate Plan and the Council's Financial Position	Adrian Dyer, Chief Executive Graham Carne, Section 151 Officer
12.00 pm	If I knew then what I know now..... Elected members to discuss and reflect on their experiences as a new councillor, roles they have developed into and what they might do differently if they were starting again	Stuart Dowding, Tony Knight and Doug Ross
12.15 pm	Mock Council Meeting	An experienced Councillor will chair a 'mock' Council meeting.
On the rising of the 'mock' council meeting	BUFFET LUNCH You will be joined by re-elected councillors and following this there will be tours of the council offices and meeting rooms	Member Support Officers

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Member Development Programme is an annual programme of development topics that will ensure Members are kept fully up to date with changes in legislation and other requirements relating to local government.

Certain aspects of the Programme will be compulsory to those Members serving on particular committees, namely Planning (understanding planning policies, legislation, local development framework) and Licensing (understanding legislation). In addition all Members must attend a session on the Code of Conduct and the Role of Standards Committee on an annual basis and it is further recommended that Equalities training should be undertaken by all Members.

As well as the compulsory training there will be a range of topics to provide knowledge of the basic operations of the Council such as Council Finances, Freedom of Information and Data Protection.

Date/Venue	Training Event	Training Category	Comment
18 May 2011 on the rising of the Annual Council meeting	Code of Conduct Training (including confidentiality)	Mandatory for all members of Council	The course will be delivered by the Monitoring Officer
1 June 2011 10 am – 3 pm Council Chamber	Planning training	Mandatory for all members of Planning Committee	Trevor Roberts Associates in conjunction with the Council's legal adviser, Planning Manager and Deputy Planning Manager,
2 June 2011 10 am – 3 pm Council Chamber	Planning training	Mandatory for all members of Planning Committee	Trevor Roberts Associates in conjunction with the Council's legal adviser, Planning Manager and Deputy Planning Manager
8 June 2011 9.30 – 12 noon	Introduction to Hinkley Point Project and this Council's involvement	All members	Arup and the Planning Manager
8 June 2011 1.00 – 4.00 pm	Site visit to Hinkley Point	All members	James Holbrook and the Planning Manager
9 June 2011 10 – 1 pm Magna Board room	Training on nuclear safety/regulatory regime and nuclear power		Pinsent Masons and the Planning Manager
21 June 2011 from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm Council Chamber	The Role of a Councillor	Discretionary	The session will be delivered by an external provider
28 June 2011 from 4.30 – 6.00 pm	Licensing Training	Mandatory for all members of Licensing Cttee	The course will be delivered at Taunton Deane council offices

7 July 2011 Council Chamber	Service Planning	Recommended	The am session for Cabinet members and the pm session is open to all members. Delivered by an external provider
11 July at 2 pm Council Chamber	Decentralisation and the Localism Bill and Media Protocol	Recommended	The course will be delivered by the Community Liaison Manager and the PR/Media Officer
20 July 2011 at 2 pm	Freedom of Information and Data Protection	Recommended	The course will be delivered by an external provider
27 July 2011 in the morning	Licensing Training	Mandatory for all members of Licensing	The course will be delivered at Sedgemoor council offices