

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards Committee
held on 12th April 2011 in the Council Chamber, Williton**

Present:

Mr T Evans Chairman

Mr I Gunn
Councillor J Davis
Councillor S de Renzy-Martin
Councillor J A Walker

Mr M Parslow
Councillor H J W Davies
Councillor J Sawyer
Councillor D J Westcott

Officers in Attendance:

Monitoring Officer (Bruce Lang)
Legal Advisor (Roy Pinney)

Meeting Administrator (Elisa Day)

S49 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

S50 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2011 – circulated with the agenda.

The Monitoring Officer updated the Committee on Minute No. S39 advising that the Resolutions referred to in the Minutes had been written up in a joint report in the name of the Chairman of the Committee and the Monitoring Officer to be considered by the West Somerset Council on 20 April 2011.

The Monitoring Officer also updated the Committee on Minute Nos. S41-S44 advising that the hearing to consider these cases would be held on Thursday 14 April 2011 and, although there were four cases to be considered, this would be dealt with through one Hearing and one Panel.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

S51 Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr J A Walker	All items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr D J Westcott	All items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and voted

S52 Public Participation

The Chairman confirmed that no member of the public had requested to speak on any agenda items.

S53 Parish /Town Council Representation on Standards Committee

The Monitoring Officer explained to the Committee the procedures regarding the appointment of Parish/Town Council Representatives on the Committee and requested consideration be given for serving Parish/Town Council representatives who were prepared to continue and were duly re-elected, to be re-appointed on to the Committee for at least a transitional period until any new voluntary standards regime was established.

Members agreed this approach would be beneficial to help maintain continuity for the committee and also expressed similar views in respect of the district council representatives who were due to be appointed after the elections.

RESOLVED (1) that, to help maintain continuity, serving Parish/Town Council representatives prepared to continue to serve on the Committee and who were duly re-elected will be re-appointed on to the Committee for at least a transitional period until any new voluntary standards regime is established.

RESOLVED (2) that the Monitoring Officer liaises with the Somerset Association of Local Councils and the Chairman to establish a process for obtaining expressions of interest and for filling any town/parish councillor vacancy in the event of all three current incumbents not being reappointed in line with Resolution(1) above

RESOLVED (3) That, the Monitoring Officer be requested to speak to the Group Manager – Corporate Services to ensure that the West Somerset Council are reminded of the agreed protocol to try to achieve continuity when they consider the appointment of three district Councillors to the Standards Committee after the election at the Annual General Meeting.

S54 Annual Report of Standards Committee – 2010/11

The Committee considered Report No. WSC 66/11 prepared by the Monitoring Officer.

The Monitoring Officer presented the draft annual report to the Committee.

The Chairman invited the Committee to make any comments/suggestions on the report to the Monitoring Officer by the end of April.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that he would re-circulate the final version of the report to the Committee before the Chairman presents it to a meeting of the West Somerset Council.

RESOLVED that the annual report for 2010/11 be agreed subject to the Monitoring Officer receiving any amendments from the Committee.

S55 Monitoring Officer's Update

The Monitoring Officer submitted a progress report on activities undertaken since the last meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

S56 Standards Committee Workplan 2011/2012

The Monitoring Officer explained to the Committee that the main issue for the next meeting of the Committee would be feedback from West Somerset Council on the way forward and this would then help to inform the Committee's workplan for 2011/2012.

RESOLVED that the current position be noted.

S57 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 provisional timetable which included quarterly Standards Committee meetings commencing at 4.30pm.

The Chairman requested the Committee give consideration to changing two of the suggested dates, as he would be unable to make them due to other commitments.

RESOLVED that the future meetings of the Committee in respect of the 2011/12 Municipal Year be scheduled to commence at 4.30pm on the following dates:

12 July 2011
11 October 2011
13 December 2011
13 March 2012

S58 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item S59 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.

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.

S59 Local Investigation – Reference WSLA18

(Report No. WSC 27/11, circulated with the Agenda).

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

The Investigator explained his findings to the Committee and confirmed that, in his opinion, there had been a breach of the Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee of the process to be followed.

RESOLVED that a Hearing should be held to consider the finding that there had been a breach of paragraph 12 of the Code of Conduct, in accordance with the detailed findings set out in the Investigator's report, and the Chairman and Monitoring Officer be requested to confirm the detailed arrangements including agreeing the membership of the Hearing Panel; it being noted that this would not be possible until the composition of the Committee was confirmed at the Annual General Meeting of the Council to be held on 18th May, 2011.

The meeting closed at 6.24 pm.