

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

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Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday 22 April 2009 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 1405
Concluded 1545

PRESENT –

Independent Persons

Mrs P Essler, Mr G Dobson and Mr M Shakeel

Parish and Town Council Members

Parish Councillors Bowen, Jay and Mitchell

Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Binney	Ikram	Q Khan

Apologies: The Very Revd Dr Ison and Councillors Ferriby, Flowers, Owens and D Smith

Mrs Essler in the Chair

48. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

49. MINUTES

Resolved -

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2009 be signed as a correct record.



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Suzan Hemingway, Assistant Director Corporate Services (City Solicitor)



50. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

51. MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT ON COMPLAINTS

The Monitoring Officer reported to the meeting the receipt of complaints notified to her, the stage that notified complaints had reached and the final outcome on the consideration of complaints, where appropriate, as set out in the table shown below.

Date of Complaint	District or Parish/Town Councillor	Initial Action of Standards Committee	Current Position	Outcome
29 June 2008	District 2008/02	Initial assessment undertaken on 14 August 2008	Monitoring Officers Report to be considered by Hearing Panel on 15 May 2009	Investigation completed
23 Sep 2008	Parish/Town 2008/05	Initial assessment undertaken on 3 December 2008	Referred to Monitoring Officer for investigation	Investigation ongoing
4 Dec 2008	District 2008/08	Initial assessment undertaken on 28 January 2009	Decision of Hearing Panel was to refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer for alternative action	Ongoing
17 Dec 2008	District 2008/09	Initial assessment undertaken on 4 February 2009	Decision of Hearing Panel was no action to be taken	
19 Dec 2008	District 2008/10	Initial assessment undertaken on 28 January 2009	Decision of Hearing Panel was to refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer for alternative action	Completed
9 Jan 2009	District 2009/01	Initial assessment undertaken on 4 February 2009	Decision of Hearing Panel was no action to be taken	
10 Feb 2009	Parish/Town 2009/02	Initial assessment undertaken on 4 March 2009	Referred to Monitoring Officer for investigation	Investigation ongoing
30 Mar 2009	Parish/Town 2009/03	Initial assessment to be undertaken on 30 April 2009		

The Monitoring Officer noted that the first complaint, which had been referred for investigation, had now been investigated and a Consideration Sub-Committee would meet shortly to consider the findings.

It was noted that initial complaints were considered within the required twenty days but any subsequent investigations took much longer and depended on the availability of all the concerned parties.

In response to a member question, the composition of hearing panels was explained, including the use of a rota and the necessity to compose panels differently depending on the nature of each complaint. It was also explained that Members would not be called if it was considered that there would be a potential conflict of interest for that Member.

No Resolution was passed in respect of this item.

ACTION: No Action

52. STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

An updated copy of the Committee's work programme was appended to the agenda for Members' information.

The Monitoring Officer also circulated a list of possible prospective dates for the Committee next year and asked for Member feedback on them. She undertook to forward them to the relevant group chief whips and Members who were not present.

A Town Councillor noted that there was a relevant item listed on the work programme for September but that she would not be available for that meeting.

Another Member passed on a request from the Chair of the Standards Committee of the Fire Service to attend a meeting of this Committee to observe.

The Chair also noted that the Chair of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee would require the work programme following on from Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Key Lines of Enquiry.

Resolved –

That the work programme be noted.

ACTION: Assistant Director Corporate Services (City Solicitor)

53. PRESENTATION FROM MEMBER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER RE: MEMBER INDUCTION AND MEMBER TRAINING

The Member Development Officer gave a presentation on the following two issues:-

- Proposals for member induction
- Proposals for member training on ethical conduct and behaviour

He advised that the group leaders were keen for him to work with the whips and to develop a draft training strategy. He considered it to be important to achieve member ownership of such a strategy right at the outset. He would be working closely with members to ensure that training would be directly relevant. He wanted to develop strong themes within the training strategy and to ensure that it was provided at appropriate times of the year.

The Monitoring Officer also advised of the importance of meeting the training needs of the parish and independent members of this committee.

The Member Development Officer noted that it was important to provide training at appropriate times of the day and in alternative formats such as CDs that could be listened to at any time.

It was noted that although the remit of the Member Development Officer did not extend to parish and town councillors, resources such as CDs could be made available to parish councils.

Members were advised that the concept of a member resource centre in City Hall was being investigated so that all training materials could be centralised. The provision of a good website facility would also be important.

In response to a member question, it was stated that training would begin in May/June and may start with training on the budget process for existing members. Issues for new members could include briefings on the planning process for ward members.

Concerns from this Committee were put to the Member Development Officer, including:-

- the lack of a comprehensive member development programme
- the need to discuss in depth with members their particular requirements
- the need for proper job descriptions for Committee roles
- the need to bear in mind member workloads when providing training

The Chair concluded the discussion by noting the intention to build resources into a positive and proactive facility for all members and the possibility of making some of those resources available to parish councils. She also noted the training requirements of this committee and requested that those be addressed as soon as possible.

No Resolution was passed in respect of this item.

**ACTION: Member Development Officer /
Assistant Director Corporate Services (City Solicitor)**

54. WEST YORKSHIRE/REGIONAL STANDARDS EVENT

Previous Reference: Minute 45 (2008/09)

The Assistant Director Corporate Services (City Solicitor) presented a report (**Document "M"**) in which the Committee was invited to consider proposals for a West Yorkshire Regional Standards Event.

She advised that she had met with the five West Yorkshire Legal Officers in March and

that everyone had been very enthusiastic about the idea of a regional event. She outlined the options set out in paragraph three of the report, stating that she would very much like Bradford to host the event.

Members welcomed the proposals warmly and discussed issues such as timings for the day and a programme for the day. It was suggested that July would be an appropriate time of year, so that new members could be welcomed and to avoid clashing with the National Assembly later in the year. After some discussion, a programme over a short full day was agreed as the most appropriate.

Suggestions for issues for inclusion in the programme were made, including:-

- relationships with the media
- declarations of interest

It was also suggested that the size of the event would mean that it would not be necessary to have break-out sessions and that open networking would be more appropriate than facilitated networking.

It was also suggested that it may be useful to invite a representative from the SBE, although that should only be considered if it were to add value to the programme.

Resolved –

- (1) **That support for a West Yorkshire Standards event be confirmed.**
- (2) **That the Monitoring Officer report the Committee's preferences/ recommendations for the event to the meeting of the West Yorkshire District Legal Officers to be held on 24 April 2009.**

ACTION: Assistant Director Corporate Services (City Solicitor)

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.

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THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER