

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

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Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday 30 June 2009 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 1405
Concluded 1505

PRESENT –

Independent Persons

Mrs P Essler, Mr G Dobson and The Very Revd Dr D J Ison

Parish and Town Council Members

Parish Councillors Bowen, Jay and Mitchell

Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
D Smith	Ferriby	Middleton
	A Thornton	

Apologies: Mr Shakeel, Councillor Binney, Councillor Lee and Councillor Owens

Mrs Essler in the Chair

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone present to the first meeting of the new municipal year.

She also noted that one of the new Members on the Committee, Councillor Lee, was unwell and so unable to attend. On behalf of the Committee she wished Councillor Lee a speedy recovery.

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Suzan Hemingway, Assistant Director Corporate Services (City Solicitor)



3. MINUTES

Resolved -

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2009 be signed as a correct record.

4. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

5. 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 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 22 July 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	Completed
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	Completed

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 undertaken on 30 April 2009	Decision of Hearing Panel was no action to be taken	Complainant has requested a review of the decision to be undertaken by Appeals Panel on 30 June 2009
13 May 2009	Parish/Town 2009/04	Initial assessment undertaken on 30 June 2009	-	-
29 May 2009	Parish/Town 2009/05	Initial assessment to be undertaken on 22 July 2009	-	-

The Monitoring Officer reminded Members that the details of each complaint remained confidential until such time as a Determination Sub-Committee was required. The purpose of the table was simply to keep Members up to date with the number of complaints received and the stage that each complaint had reached.

Members expressed some concern that, in cases where an investigation had been required, it seemed to be taking quite some time to conduct those investigations.

The Monitoring Officer accepted the concerns expressed and advised that the issue appeared to involve the competing demands of making sure investigations were both thorough and timely. She had conferred with her fellow Monitoring Officers across West Yorkshire and they had confirmed that their investigations were also proceeding at much the same pace.

In response to a question from a Member, she advised that while telephone interviews with individuals involved in an investigation were possible, it was preferable to conduct such interviews face-to-face wherever possible. As well as being a more satisfactory interview, this would also help to ensure confidentiality.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Monitoring Officer's report on complaints be noted.**
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer be requested to ascertain the reasons for the delay in concluding investigations and to investigate whether the process could be expedited.**

ACTION: Monitoring Officer

6. APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee was advised that the Constitution required it to appoint the following Sub-Committees:-

- i) Assessment Sub-Committee
- ii) Review Sub-Committee
- iii) Consideration Sub-Committee
- iv) Determination Sub-Committee

The Panels were required to hear and determine allegations of breach of the relevant code(s) of conduct by Members of Council and of Parish and Town Councils respectively.

Resolved –

That the Assessment, Review, Consideration and Determination Sub-Committees be appointed with memberships and role and functions as contained in the Constitution and subject to the Rules of Procedure contained in Part 3 of the Constitution adopted by Annual Council on 19 May 2009.

ACTION: Monitoring Officer

7. WEST YORKSHIRE REGIONAL STANDARDS CONFERENCE

Members were reminded that the first West Yorkshire Regional Standards Conference was to be held on Thursday 9 July 2009 in the Banqueting Suite, City Hall, Bradford.

Representatives from all five West Yorkshire Standards Committees would be attending and, as well as forming part of the member development programme for members of the Bradford Standards Committee it was hoped that it would provide a valuable opportunity to network with member colleagues from across the Region.

The agenda for the Conference was circulated at the meeting and it was noted that it would also be forwarded to absent Members.

ACTION: Committee Services Officer

8. EIGHTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Members were asked to note that the eighth annual assembly of Standards Committees was to be held in Birmingham on 12-13 October 2009.

Three places had been reserved for delegates from Bradford to attend and the Committee was asked to nominate Members to take up those places.

It was noted that the date of the Conference clashed with the October meeting of Council, making it very difficult for the District Councillors on the Committee to attend.

Members concurred that the opportunity to attend should be offered in the first instance to those Members of the Committee who had previously not attended an Assembly. They also agreed that it was important that the Chair should attend.

Resolved –

- (1) That Mrs Essler, Councillor Bowen and Mr Shakeel be nominated to attend the eighth annual assembly of standards committees.**
- (2) That in the event that one of the above named nominees is unable to attend, the Member Development Officer take up that place.**

ACTION: Monitoring Officer

9. DATES OF MEETINGS

The Committee was asked to consider the establishment of a programme for dates for the municipal year.

Resolved –

That a programme of dates be established in consultation with the Chair.

ACTION: Monitoring Officer

10. STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

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

Resolved –

That the work programme be noted.

ACTION: No Action

Chair

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

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