

Standards Committee – 7 October 2010

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held on **7 October 2010** when there were present:-

DISTRICT MEMBERS

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr C I Black
Cllr P A Capon
Cllr D Merrick

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Mr D J Cottis (Chairman)
Mr M G Drage
Mr S Shadbolt
Mrs L Walker

PARISH MEMBERS

Cllr P Beckers
Cllr Mrs D Constable
Cllr Mrs L A Vingoe

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Bugeja - Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services/Monitoring Officer
M Power - Committee Administrator

255 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Council's Monitoring Officer confirmed that the issue of the Barling Magna Parish Council dispensation would be followed up. (HLEMS)

256 LOCAL INVESTIGATION AND DETERMINATION

The decision of the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee meeting convened on 8 September 2010 was noted. In response to a question, Members were advised that a detailed record was maintained with full details of the Hearing.

257 MANDATORY TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services on mandatory training arrangements.

It was agreed that Members should be encouraged to attend Planning Appeal Inquiries relating to decisions made by the Council, as this can be a useful experience. Being present at such an Inquiry would provide Members with the

opportunity to view the principles of planning in practice and to experience another aspect of the planning process.

It was appreciated that as Planning Inquiries are held in the daytime, Members who worked during the day would be generally unable to attend. It was also felt that the planning-related training session held in October each year provided Members with useful information in terms of current planning legislation and, as such, provided a valuable training opportunity for Members.

As a result of these discussions, it was agreed that although attendance at Planning Inquiries should be highly recommended and encouraged, it should not count towards a Member's mandatory planning training requirement.

The Committee considered whether there should be monitoring to ensure that attendees of mandatory training sessions are present at the training for a specified time. It was felt that attendance at mandatory planning training sessions should be for the specified two hours, which could be achieved by Members signing out as they leave the training session. Failure to complete the specified two hours would result in the mandatory training requirement for that phase of the training not being fulfilled. It was noted that there was a potential issue of officer resource associated with the implementation of this policy.

Resolved

- (1) That the initial session of mandatory planning-related training, held each year prior to the first Development Committee meeting, be of a fixed format, covering planning policy and planning legislation and, if possible, run by the Council's officers.
- (2) That Members be encouraged to attend Planning Inquiries but that such attendance would not be counted as satisfying part of the mandatory planning training requirement.
- (3) That monitoring be introduced to ensure that attendees of mandatory training sessions are present at the training for the specified two hours by way of a signing out column added to the attendance signing sheet. (HLEMS)

258 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2010/11 – MID PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Committee received the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services on the mid-programme review of the Member Learning and Development Programme 2010/11.

During Member discussion, the following points were noted:-

- It was felt that attendance levels at training could be improved and it was recommended that ways of promoting attendance at training sessions be a subject for discussion at the next meeting.
- There was concern that attendance by the Parish/Town Councils could be improved. Although every Parish/Town Council is provided with details of the training sessions to which they are invited, it appeared that there was an element of confusion around how many Members from each Council were permitted to come. It was requested that each Parish/Town Council clerk be written to confirming that, subject to availability, places on relevant District Council Member Learning & Development courses are offered to all Parish/Town Councillors and Clerks, and not restricted to just one per Parish/Town Council. This notification should be sent as soon as possible to encourage Councils to make bookings to attend courses in the current phase of training.
- A Member requested that a Speed Reading course be included in a future training programme.
- Earlier in the week the Council achieved the South East Charter for Elected Member Development with ‘flying colours’. Congratulations were extended to Members of the Charter Implementation Group, which is a Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee, and the officers involved for all their hard work.

Resolved

That the 2010/11 Member Learning and Development Mid-Programme review is noted. (HLEMS)

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm.

Chairman

Date

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