

A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

WAS HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2008

Councillors Carr, Kimber (P), Langdon (P), Smith, Wright and Mrs Wright (P)

Independent Members: Mr R V Perry (P), vacancy.

33. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Carr, Smith and Wright.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

35. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Governance Committee held on 10 December 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

36. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

37. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

38. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND ANALYSIS

Consideration was given to a report of the Corporate Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book at Appendix 'A') which considered an analysis of complaints for the first 6 months of the current financial year.

At the meeting of the Committee held on 14 December 2006 it was resolved that six-monthly complaints monitoring reports would be submitted to the Board. Members would then be in a position to identify any trends and, if necessary, make any recommendations to Council on the operation of the Customer Complaints Procedures.

Members commented on the low level of complaints received during the year, especially in comparison to other authorities, and considered this to be a credit to the Council. The complaints process was discussed and officers explained that internal audit kept a close eye on the trends of complaints and, if necessary, could examine the performance more closely.

As stated in the report, It was noted that 41 of the 47 complaints made to the Planning Department concerned the same issue, which had been satisfactorily resolved.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Corporate Services Manager be noted.

39. INTERNAL AUDIT MONITORING STATEMENT Q3 2007-08

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Internal Audit and Risk Assurance (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book at Appendix 'B') which advised the Committee on the latest information arising from Internal Audit work up to the end of December 2007.

The report provided a nine month update on the completion of the 2007/08 audit plan and highlighted agreed recommendations to management. Progress against the agreed audit plan had remained positive throughout the nine months of the year. The programme was on target to achieve full coverage by 31 March 2008. In addition, a summary of agreed internal audit recommendations was included with the report.

Members were informed that the amount of sickness leave had greatly reduced and was now well within the 'budgeted' amount for the year. Staff had become better qualified and the time allocated to audit in some areas had been reduced as there was often little to examine on a yearly basis.

Members were pleased with the progress being made and congratulated officers accordingly.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the output and outcomes of the Internal Audit section against its overall annual plan at the nine month stage of the year.

40. STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Consideration was given to a joint report of the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer and Head of Internal Audit and Risk Assurance (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book at Appendix 'C') which advised the Committee on the direction of Governance work for the 2007/2008 Municipal Year.

Members were informed that, due to unforeseen circumstances, the Code of Conduct and Hearings update report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

Members were advised that necessary changes would be made to the Constitution after the local elections in May. The Borough Solicitor would confer with Members of the Council on how they would like to proceed. It would be essential to have Members on board to examine ideas. The Borough Solicitor confirmed that she still possessed the e-mails that had been sent to the Constitution Review e-mail address, but would also undertake another consultation through the Members Information Bulletin and also directly with Councillors.

Officers confirmed that Mazaars would be attending the meeting of the Committee to be held on 24 April 2008, and that a copy of the inspection letter would be sent to Councillors a week before the Agenda for that meeting was due to be delivered. It was noted that the Strategic Audit Plan 2008/11 and the Review of Future Review Areas for the Committee would be presented in January 2009 as there would be no meeting held in December 2008.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the amendments highlighted by the Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer, the revised work programme for the Committee be approved.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 6.25pm.

CHAIRMAN