

**A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2010**

Councillors Burgess (P), Chegwyn (P), Forder (P), Kimber (P), Scard and Wright (P).

Independent Members: Mr R V Perry (P) and Mr G Lidgley (P).

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Philpott had been nominated to replace Councillor Scard for this meeting.

22. APOLOGIES

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Scard.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Chegwyn declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item no. 11 (*Consideration of Investigating Officer's Report Into Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members*).

24. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Governance Committee held on 16 September 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

25. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

26. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

27. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Consideration was given to a joint report of the Financial Services Manager and the Head of Internal Audit and Risk Assurance which provided a six month update on risk management.

With regard to instances of major power failure in the Town Hall or where customers were unable to contact the Council by telephone, Members were advised that there were contingency plans to deal with long term incidents but short term occurrences which by their nature could be resolved more quickly, would lead to some inconvenience to customers for a limited time.

With regard to concessionary travel, risk was associated with the possibility of bus companies lodging appeals. However, changes to the grant arrangements were taking place and, from 1 April 2011, concessionary travel would no longer be the responsibility of the Borough Council. Should any appeal be made during the current financial year the process could extend into the following financial year.

The difficulties of ensuring that bus companies claimed for the correct journeys was raised and Members were advised that some monitoring was carried out, although its effectiveness was limited. Audits were carried out to ensure charges were reasonable.

With regard to investment counterparties, Members were advised that the Borough Council adopted a low risk approach rather than seeking the highest returns available.

RESOLVED: That the risk management action plan, strategic risk register and risk management policy, as shown in the joint report of the Financial Services Manager and the Head of Internal Audit and Risk Assurance, be noted and approved.

28. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor which considered a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Council commit to the South East Charter for Elected Member Development and begins work towards achieving the Charter, including the setting up of a Member Development Working Group.

The following views were expressed by Members on the subject of Member Development:

- Members' training events were often poorly attended
- Commitment from political leaders would be needed
- Political groups already carried out mentoring of their new Members
- More information was needed before a decision could be made on whether to progress with achieving the Charter
- The current financial situation could be prohibitive
- Training for new Members was not always of sufficient quality
- The Charter would specify quality assurance and support more coherent training
- The training would help all Members to develop and improve
- The training would be designed to help Members achieve the Council's aims although not all would necessarily agree with those aims
- Member training was generally good
- The cost of achieving the Charter could be funded by using an element of Members' Allowances withheld due to non-attendance at training courses
- A number of local authorities had already signed up to the Charter and the cost of the training was not expensive
- A standard for Members needed to be set

Members decided that, before taking the matter further, Member Development on the lines

indicated should be referred back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further information on how the scheme would operate and how it would be funded. It was suggested that the Independent Remuneration Panel could be asked to investigate how the achievement of the Charter could be funded using an element of Members' Allowances.

RESOLVED: That the issue of commitment to the South East Charter for Elected Member Development be referred back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to obtain further information on how the scheme would operate and how it would be funded, including how the achievement of the Charter could be funded using an element of Members' Allowances so that those attending most training sessions would contribute the least.

29. STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Consideration was given to the Workplan of the Standards and Governance Committee.

The issue of the publication of Members' attendance records was raised under Any Other Items where it was agreed that this should be added to the Workplan.

RESOLVED: That

- a) the publication of Members' attendance records be added to the Workplan; and
- b) the Standards and Governance Committee Workplan be noted.

30. MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORDS

The issue of the publication of Members' attendance records was raised under Any Other Items. It was proposed and agreed that a report be made to the Standards and Governance Committee on 20 January 2011.

RESOLVED: That a report on the publication of Members' attendance records be submitted to the Committee on 20 January 2011.

31. FUTURE OF THE STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Chairman raised the issue of the future of the Standards and Governance Committee under Any Other Items. It was agreed that the publication of the new Bill should be awaited before any action was taken.

RESOLVED: That the publication of the new Bill be awaited before any action is taken regarding the future of the Standards and Governance Committee.

32. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That in relation to the following item the public be excluded from the meeting, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the

proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraphs 1 and 7C of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

33. CONSIDERATION OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER'S REPORT INTO ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

Note: Councillor Chegwyn declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, left the meeting room and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Consideration was given to an exempt report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

The report was exempt from publication as the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing it.

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer into the investigation of two complaints made against a Member of the Council and concluded that the Councillor in question did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct for Members of Gosport Borough Council.

The Committee's reasons for this finding stemmed from the facts of the investigation carried out by an external investigator and the report from the Deputy Monitoring Officer, annexing the report of the findings of the investigator.

The Committee concluded that there was no case to answer.

RESOLVED: That there be no case to answer regarding the above alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Members.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN