

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Held on: **WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2003**

Held at: **OCTAGON SUITE, BRADLEY ROAD, TROWBRIDGE**

Present:

District Council Councillors Clark and Manasseh
Representatives:

External Tony Frost (Chair), Margaret Ellwood and Keith West.
Representatives:

Town/Parish Council Christopher Holmes and Victoria Landell Mills
Representatives:

Officers: Corporate Officer (Democratic Services) and Member Support
 Manager.

Also present: Councillors Burnan, Conley, Hawker and Knight.

14 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Baker and Farkas.

15 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

17 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to Members

The Chair welcomed all members, existing and new, to the Standards Committee.

18 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

19 INVESTIGATION AND ADJUDICATION OF COMPLAINTS

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Legal Services Manager which briefed the Committee on its role in the process for handling complaints about the conduct of members.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

20 WORKING GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS AFFECTING MORE THAN ONE AREA COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Legal Services Manager, which set out details of draft Working Guidelines for Planning Applications that were sent directly to the Regulatory Committee without first being considered by Area Committee.

RESOLVED: That the draft Working Guideline attached as Appendix 1 to Report No. 8 be approved and referred to the Regulatory Committee for confirmation and incorporation into the Constitution, subject to the amendment of the wording of paragraph 23.4.8 to read as follows:-

"Planning applications affecting more than one area committee: Under Section 9.1.3 at page 53 where a planning application affects more than one area committee that matter will be referred to Regulatory Committee.

The officer or officers preparing the report will report to the area committees in which the areas affected by the matter are situated. That report will:

- set out the material facts and policy issues;*
- explain why the matter is going to Regulatory Committee;*
- clearly and briefly explain the views of any person or organisation who has submitted a view; and*
- contain a clear statement in the recommendation saying that the area committee is being consulted and that its views will be referred to the Regulatory Committee, which will determine the application*

The officer will then prepare a written report for Regulatory Committee which:

- sets out the material facts and policy issues;*
- explains why the officer considers that the matter should be decided by the Regulatory Committee;*

- *clearly and briefly explains the views of any person or organisation who has submitted a view; and*
- *the resolution of each area committee consulted, and the reasons for the resolution (including any material consideration which the area committee considered to be of particular importance)- as an appendix*
- *a note of the numbers of councillors who voted for and against the application when it was considered by each area committee and the number of councillors who abstained from voting*
- *a recommendation from the Head of Regulatory Services (and, in the body of the report, any information or views needed to explain her/his recommendation)."*

21 UPDATE OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT COUNCILLORS

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Legal Services Manager which advised members of the results of two investigations by the Standards Board for England.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

22 WORK PROGRAMME FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to a report prepared by Gareth Owens, Legal Services Manager, which set out a Work Programme for the Committee over the next six months.

The Corporate Officer advised members of two further items for the next meeting of the Committee:-

- Term of Office of the Leader - at the Annual Council meeting on 14 May 2003, members had asked the Standards Committee to give consideration to changing the length of term of office for the Leader from four years to one year.
- Amendments to Protocol on Planning, Licensing and Other Regulatory Functions

The Chair informed members that he envisaged that the Committee could take a wider role, with its members being developed to undertake other tasks. He, along with the Vice-Chair, Corporate Officer (Democratic Services) and the Legal Services Manager would be holding a meeting to look at ways of extending the role of the Committee in a more positive way.

Ideas for further consideration included:-

- The creation of a mission statement for the Committee
- The production of an annual report of the Committee
- The creation of additional tasks for the Committee in respect of:

- Preventing misconduct
- An ethical audit of the Council's own procedures to identify hotspots
- A review of the probity and ethics of the Council's partner organisations
- Clearing up public misconceptions about Local Authorities

RESOLVED: That the work programme be approved, subject to the addition of the following items:

- **Term of Office of the Leader**
- **Amendments to Protocol on Planning, Licensing and Other Regulatory Functions**

23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 3 September 2003.

These minutes were prepared by Mandy Arnold, Member Support Manager
Telephone direct 01225 770312
Email marnold@westwiltshire.gov.uk

The meeting started at 7pm and finished at 8.20pm