

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th April, 2005.

Present:-

Co-opted Independent Members:-

The Reverend Paul Lipscomb (Chair), Mr Fred Ashmore, Mr Mike Field and Mr Zahir Khan

Elected Members:-

Councillors Neil Arnold, Michael Holledge, Pauline Key, Sumander Khan and Lydia Simmons.

Apology for Absence:- Councillor Mewa Mann.

PART I

21. Declarations of Interest

None.

22. Minutes

The minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 20th January, 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23. The Standards Board for England's Consultation Paper – "A Code for the Future"

The Director of Law and Corporate Governance submitted for consideration a copy of the Standards Board for England's Consultation Paper entitled "A Code for the Future" which sought views on a number of issues relating to the current Local Code of Conduct for Members in the form of questions to which the Board was seeking responses by 17th June.

The purpose of the consultation was to review the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct and explore ways in which it could be simplified, clarified and improved.

The Director of Law and Corporate Governance submitted suggested draft responses to the questions proposed in the Consultation document which the Committee considered in detail during which a number of amendments were proposed and accepted.

Resolved – That the responses to the questions proposed in the Consultation Paper "A Code for the Future" as now amended be approved for submission to the Standards Board for England.

24. Review of the Planning Code of Conduct for Members and Officers – Proposed Replacement of Informal Planning Meetings

At the request of Member Panel on the Constitution at its meeting held on 23rd February, 2005, the Director of Law and Corporate Governance had drawn up a draft public participation scheme as an alternative to the current informal planning meetings which were cumbersome to administer and had a number of procedural drawbacks.

The Director of Law and Corporate Governance submitted for consideration a copy of the draft public participation scheme which had been approved by the Member Panel on the Constitution on the 15th March 2005. Details of how the scheme would work together with copies of the letters and other documents which would be issued under the scheme were submitted to the Committee.

The Members were of the view that although it was likely that the public participation scheme would lengthen the duration of the Planning Committee meetings its advantages over informal planning meetings outweighed this drawback. In particular attention was drawn to the fact that the public participation scheme would allow those Members of the Planning Committee taking a decision on an application to be present when representations were made; the scheme allowed all interested parties to have a say and was relatively simple to administer.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Committee concur with the Member Panel on the Constitution that the Public Participation Scheme now submitted replace the Informal Planning Meetings Procedure contained in paragraph 9 of the Planning Code of Conduct for Members and Officers.
- (b) That, subject to the approval of the Council, the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.

Chair

(Note: The meeting opened at 6.15 p.m. and closed at 7.16 p.m.)