

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Caddstown Business Support Centre, Caddstown Business Park, Bideford

Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2008

PRESENT: Mr B Ormerod (Chairman)  
Mrs S Wragge-Morley (Independent Representative)  
Mr R Clark, Mrs G Millman, Mr R Riggulsford and Mr C Yipp (Parish Representatives)  
Mr R De Crausaz, Venerable M Edson, Mr S Morgan and (Independent Representatives)  
Councillors Mrs M Brown, Mrs R A Lock, P W Pennington and S Robinson (Torrige District Councillors)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr K Miles (Monitoring Officer and Adviser to the Committee and Solicitor)  
Mr R De Wreede (Assistant Solicitor)  
Ms K Blong (Substitute Clerk to the Committee)

APOLOGIES: Councillor G E Lee

27. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: -

That Mrs S Wragge-Morley be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee.

(Vote: Unanimous)

28. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2008

In reference to the appointment of a Parish Representative the Monitoring Officer and Solicitor advised that the recruitment process would be initiated for an Independent Member. Adverts would be placed in the press; the Chairman of the Committee and the Chief Executive would interview from a shortlist drawn of prospective candidates.

The Chairman confirmed that he would be attending the Full Council Meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> October.

29. SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

The Monitoring Officer and Solicitor felt that it would be beneficial to the Committee to be provided with a summary of decisions made through the filtering process of the Subcommittees.

The Summary from the first Subcommittee was not included as Members did not want the summary of the complaint made public - details will be provided to the Parish Council. The Subcommittee may want to revise this decision as it is hindering the investigation process. The Monitoring Officer and Solicitor also confirmed that the

summaries provided are within the three-month appeal period. Members were advised that Subcommittee Minutes would be provided on the Agenda and the same format will be used.

30. LIAISON MEETING

The Monitoring Officer and Solicitor asked the Committee to consider presenting information to the Liaison Committees in order to clarify the role of the Standards Committee and to receive feedback. The Committee were asked which Members would like to attend and how the information should be presented.

Councillor Mrs M Brown highlighted that Parish and Town Councils are often unhappy with the decisions of the Standards Committee and the general understanding of the role of the Standards Committee is poor. Clarification was also needed regarding the lack of power the Standards Committee has regarding Planning decisions. It should also be made clear that it is acceptable for Parish Councillors to disagree with the opinion of other Parish Councillors.

It is hoped that these meetings would raise awareness and direct Councillor to the Standards Boards Website for more information.

31. TRAINING

Members were asked to split in to the three subcommittees to discuss examples Standards Board decisions with regard to how appeals against first filter decisions not to investigate. There was some ambiguity as to how the examples should be approached. The guidelines did not make it clear if Members should be reviewing the decision made based on the original evidence presented or reviewing the decision as an appeal – i.e. looking at the original evidence, the procedure followed and any new evidence. The Monitoring Officer and Solicitor will contact the Standards board to request clarification as when considering examples K and L the Members did not have all the documents that the original decision was based upon.

It was highlighted that if a new allegation arose then this would have to be redirected to the filter process - not just attached as part of a review.

In response to a query the Solicitor explained Torridge District Councils whistle blowing policy and the process used to report any illegal activity.

The Committee agreed that more training would be beneficial and the cases to put on the next Agenda would be C, E and G.

A copy of the Standards Board for England Annual Review 2007/2008 is available in the Members room at Riverbank House and can also be viewed on the website.

It was confirmed that the Chairman would be attending the Annual Conference but places were still available.

32. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> October was rescheduled for the 17<sup>th</sup> October, 10.00am, Committee Room, Riverbank House.

The Chairman closed the Meeting.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and ended at 12pm.

Date ..... Chairman .....

