

Standards Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2008

Present:

The Right Worshipful, The Lord Mayor, Councillor Glynn Evans – In the Chair
Councillors Burns and Whitmore.

Mrs E. Carmichael and Mr J. A. Snadden – independent members

ST/08/1 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2007.

ST/08/2 Conduct for Members - consultation

The City Solicitor submitted a report seeking the Committee's comments on the consultation paper issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the proposed changes to the code of conduct for members, and updating the Committee on the Council's involvement in the Standards Board for England's local filter and monitoring and audit pilots.

Members were concerned that the deadline of 15 February did not allow sufficient time for proper consideration by political groups given the important and sensitive issues that were involved for elected members. Independent Members shared this concern indicating that the Forum of Independent Members was not scheduled to meet until 1 March, after the deadline had passed. They also expressed an interest in seeing the response from the political groups before finalising their own response. All members were concerned to note that the Local Government Association appeared to be out of the loop in terms of national level consultation.

Decision

1. To request the City Solicitor to register the Committee's concerns with the Department for Communities and Local Government regarding the inadequacy of the consultation period, and to establish the extent of any possible extension beyond the stated closing date for the submission of late responses.
2. To also request the City Solicitor to clarify with the Local Government Association whether it has been afforded an opportunity to comment on the proposals from a national perspective.

ST/08/3 Code of Conduct – member briefings

The Committee received an oral report from the City Solicitor on the five briefing sessions for members of the Council.

Decision

To note the report.

ST/08/4 Standards Board for England – 7th Annual Assembly

The Committee received reports back from delegates to the 6th Annual Assembly held in 2007 in Birmingham.

Decision

1. To note the reports.
2. To agree that the two independent members and Councillors Burns and Whitmore, together with the City Solicitor or her nominee, be authorised to attend the 2008 Conference.

ST/07/5 Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality

The Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality was submitted for inspection.