

**MINUTES of the meeting of Standards Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Friday 2 October 2009 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:** David Stevens (Independent Member) (Chairman)

Jake Bharier, Gething, Stevens, J Stone and JB Williams, (Local Authority Representative)

**19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Ms Isabel Fox, Mr John Hardwick and Mr Robert Rogers.

In the absence of the Chairman, it was **resolved (unanimously) that David Stevens be elected Chairman for the meeting**

**20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**21. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED: (unanimously) that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**22. APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS RECEIVED FROM PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS**

**RESOLVED: (unanimously) that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**23. THE NEW CONSTITUTION**

The Interim Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic, briefed the Committee on the background to the new constitution to be tabled at the meeting of Council on 13 November 2009.

The Committee emphasised the need for the text to be clear and easy to use. A more detailed report would be considered at the Committee's next meeting on 08 January 2010.

**RESOLVED: (unanimously) that the report be noted.**

**24. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHRONICLE AWARDS 2010**

The Committee considered the basis for its entry into the Standards and Ethics category of the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2010. Members agreed that Mr Richard Gething,

Mr David Stevens and Councillor Beris Williams would work on the detailed submission, to be approved by the Chairman after the meeting. The Council would provide any necessary resources.

**RESOLVED: (unanimously) that a working party consisting of Mr Richard Gething, Mr David Stevens and Councillor Beris Williams, be formed to work on the Committee's entry into the Standards and Ethics category of the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2010, and that the submission be approved by the Chairman.**

**25. MODERN.GOV**

**MODERN.GOV**

The Interim Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic, apprised the Committee of plans for a major upgrade to the Modern.Gov computer software used by the Democratic Services team to produce agenda, minutes and reports. The improved system would include a package to manage the local filter, and would be capable of producing all documents used in the Standards complaints process. In addition, the system would automate much of the work involved in the local filter process, from initial complaint through to hearing.

**RESOLVED: (unanimously) that the report be noted.**

**26. STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND BULLETIN 45**

The Committee noted the latest bulletin from Standards for England.

**27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 08 January 2010 at 2.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber at Brockington.

**EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED: (unanimously) that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Act.**

**28. LOCAL FILTER CASES AND DETERMINATIONS**

Members reviewed progress on complaints about local authority, town and parish councillors since the introduction of the local filter on 08 May 2008. The Assessment and Review Sub-Committees had dealt with sixty-six complaints to date. Although many of the complaints during 2009 related to a single council, it was clear that dealing with complaints was now a major area of work. The committee discussed the subject of confidentiality at the various stages of handling complaints. Standards for England guidance was not clear and there were situations that were not properly covered. The Interim Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic agreed to prepare a brief for the committee to discuss at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED: (unanimously) that:**

- (i) The report be noted; and**
  
- (ii) The Interim Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic be instructed to prepare a briefing note on confidentiality during the various stages of complaint handling.**

The meeting ended at 4.40 pm

**CHAIRMAN**