



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

3.00 p.m. – 3.50 p.m.

2 September 2009

Present: Mr P Franzen (Chair), Mr C Thrower (Vice-Chair), Councillors Bearman, Gihawi, Holmes and Lubbock

Apologies: Councillors Blower and Lay

1. HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

The Chair noted that this would be the last meeting attended by John Jones, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and welcomed his successor Philip Hyde.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) record the Committee's gratitude to John Jones, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, for his support and advice and to wish him well for the future;
- (2) welcome Philip Hyde, Head of Legal, Regulatory and Democratic Services.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2009.

3. MONITORING OFFICER PROTOCOL

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in his capacity as Monitoring Officer, presented the report and answered questions. He explained that having a protocol was good practice and formalised existing procedures.

During discussion members considered the situation of a complaint being made about a Monitoring Officer. Members were advised that in such circumstances there were statutory procedures to follow and that the complaint could be made to the Head of Paid Services (Chief Executive Officer).

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that that the protocol would also be considered by the Constitution Working Party at its meeting on 14 September 2009.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) endorse the Draft Monitoring Officer Protocol;
- (2) recommend the Protocol to Council for inclusion as an appendix to the Council's Constitution.

4. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in his capacity as Monitoring Officer, presented the report and answered questions.

In response to a question, members were advised that the 'Members' Code of Conduct' was included in the Council's Constitution; all members had received a copy of the guide produced by Standards for England and the code was also available to members in the more portable form in the Council's Civic Diary.

RESOLVED to note the report;

5. STANDARDS BOARD INTERVENTION, JOINT STANDARD COMMITTEES AND DISPENSATIONS

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report and answered questions.

RESOLVED to note the :-

- (1) power of Standards for England to give a direction to a Standards Committee to suspend its initial assessment functions and to provide for them to be exercised by the Board or the Standards Committee of another authority;
- (2) regulations for appointing joint standards committees; and,
- (3) arrangements for granting of dispensations to Members who would otherwise be prohibited from participating owing to a prejudicial interest.

6. STANDARDS AND ETHICS AT NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report and answered questions.

During discussion there was in principle support for developing the role of the Standards Committee and making it more proactive. However, one member queried the need for improvement given that no complaints had been received in 2008/2009.

It was also suggested that, for training purposes, it would be useful if the Committee looked at previous case studies in detail.

RESOLVED to ask the Monitoring Officer to report on proposals for evolving the role of the Council's Standards Committee to the next meeting.

CHAIR