

24th September 2007

PLEASE NOTE START TIME OF MEETING

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** will be held in the **Council Chamber** at these offices on **TUESDAY 2nd OCTOBER 2007 at 7.00 p.m.**, when your attendance is requested.

Yours sincerely

JOHN JORY

Chief Executive.

A G E N D A

Pages

1. To note Substitutes in Accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4 – Substitutes at Meetings of Committees etc.
2. To receive Apologies for Absence
3. To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda.
4. To confirm the Minutes of the Committee held on 19th July 2007. **3 - 5**
5. Welcome to new Members and brief explanation of the new Role for the Standards Committee under the Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act.
6. Standards Board for England DVD presentation
7. Review of further training needs and options
8. Verbal report on the Standards Sub-Committee Hearing held on the 28th September 2007.

Please note: An oral report or additional written information arising after the despatch of this Agenda may be given on any of the above items.

9. To consider any items that the Chairman agrees to take as urgent business.
10. Questions pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 10 due notice of which has been given.

To: **Members of the Standards Committee** – Mrs. J. Forbes, Mrs. G. Field, Mrs. S. Hatton, Mrs. J. Landriani, Mrs H. Ross, Sir Roger Sands, Mr. P. Shanahan, Mr. G.C.E. Snowling, Mr. T. Swainson and Mrs P. Webster

Requesting Members: Mr. J. Ash-Edwards, Mr. B. Hall, Mr. C. Hersey, Mr. G. Marples, and Mrs. S. Seward

Agenda only to remaining Members of the Council for information.

**Minutes of a meeting of the Mid Sussex District Council
Standards Committee held on Thursday 19th July 2007
From 5.30pm to 6.00pm**

Present:- Councillors Susanna Kemp, Heather Ross and Christopher Snowling.

Sir Roger Sands and Trevor Swainson (Independent members of the Committee)

Also Present: Councillors Trevor Fisher and Sue Hatton.

1. SUBSTITUTES

None.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Christopher Snowling nominated Sir Roger Sands as Chairman of the Committee for the 2007/08 Council year. This was seconded by Councillor Heather Ross.

RESOLVED

That Sir Roger Sands be elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2007/08 Council year.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Heather Ross nominated Councillor Christopher Snowling as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the 2007/08 Council year.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Christopher Snowling be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the 2007/08 Council year.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Committee held on the 1st March 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. A NEW ROLE FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT.

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report, highlighting the increased role of the Committee under the proposals, as it would become responsible for filtering complaints in addition to hearing a higher proportion of cases. He added that this would require an increase in membership of the Standards Committee.

It was explained that these changes would probably come into effect in May 2008 and therefore Members were advised to recommend implementing the change of membership now to allow the Committee time to prepare.

The Committee felt that the proposals represented a significant increase in membership and that it would be hard to judge the potential workload in advance.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Monitoring Officer explained that hearings would be conducted by a panel of three members and that, should a case go to appeal, it would need to be heard by a panel of different members.

He also clarified that following the expected change in legislation, the Standards Board would only hear cases relating to suspension of over three months or disqualification.

The Committee agreed that it would be necessary to increase to the size proposed in the report to ensure that there would always be adequate cover for hearings and appeals. It was agreed that these changes should take place now to allow for adequate preparation and training.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

7. FUTURE TRAINING FOR MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF DISTRICT AND PARISH COUNCILS.

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report, explaining that combined training for members of the Standards Committee would be offered across the Council's in West Sussex. He felt that this would provide opportunities to learn from the experiences of Standards Committees at the other Councils.

The Chairman suggested that the training take place after the Act was passed, to allow for any changes that may be introduced in the final stages of the process.

It was stated that there were two parish cases currently pending, which would need to be heard by the Committee under the current system.

A Member asked whether there was any information that the Committee could access to offer guidance for new and returning members of the Committee. The Monitoring Officer directed the Committee to the website of the Standards Board and offered to circulate relevant materials.

It was agreed that an informal meeting to work through scenarios would be one useful form of training.

Members agreed with the proposal for training to be undertaken by the Committee between November 2007 and May 2008 to prepare for the new role for the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

Chairman