

Medway Council
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2004

7pm to 8pm

RECORD OF THE MEETING

PRESENT:

Committee members: Councillor Buckwell, David Coomber (parish council representative), Michael Coulson (independent member) (chairman), Anthony Dance (independent member), Alan Povey (independent member), Councillor Mrs Shaw, Michael Swaby (parish council representative) and Laura Wren (independent member).

610 RECORD OF THE MEETING

The record of the meeting held on 24 September 2003 was agreed and signed by the chairman as correct subject to the addition of Laura Wren to the members present at the meeting.

611 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kearney.

612 PROTOCOL FOR MUTUAL ASSISTANCE BY KENT AND MONITORING OFFICERS

Discussion:

The Monitoring Officer asked members to consider a proposed protocol for co-operation between monitoring officers where they are unable to act within their own authorities due to a conflict of interest.

Decision:

- (a) The approved protocol was agreed.
- (b) The committee recommended to Cabinet that Medway Council's Monitoring Officer and his staff were placed at the disposal of the authorities identified in the protocol as and when required.

613 CIPFA/SOLACE CODE OF GOVERNANCE

Discussion:

The Monitoring Officer presented a report asking the committee to consider its role in monitoring the operation of the CIPFA/SOLACE code of governance at Medway.

Decision:

That the Monitoring Officer bring an annual report to the Standards Committee on compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE code of governance at Medway.

614 PLANNING CODE OF CONDUCT

Discussion:

The Monitoring Officer advised members of the outcome of the consultation on the draft planning code of conduct and presented a report that sought the agreement of the committee to refer the code of conduct to Full Council for adoption on 7 April 2004.

Decision:

- (a) That the planning code of conduct is submitted to Full Council for approval on 7 April 2004.
- (b) To add to the section of the report with regard to members involvement in their own planning applications to add:

"Members should carefully consider using agents for their own planning applications."
- (c) That the second sentence of bullet point 4.11 of the code be deleted.
- (d) That paragraph 4.1 of the report be amended to add the following example:

"A member who makes a statement in favour of or against a planning proposal in advance of the committee to decide the application will have fettered their discretion and will not be able to partake in the decision making process."
- (e) That the Monitoring Officer will contact parish clerks and provide them with a copy of the planning code of conduct and enquire what type of training would most suit their members.

615 UPDATE ON STANDARDS ISSUES

Discussion:

The Monitoring Officer presented members with a report that updated members on the key developments relating to the work of the committee. The chairman reported back on the work of the Kent/Medway and South of England regional networks of independent members.

Decision:

- (a) Members deferred a decision on attendance at the conference of the Standards Board for England.
- (b) The Monitoring Officer, in conjunction with the Head of Council Office, was instructed to explore options for training members and the undertaking of hearings for the breaches of the code of conduct and report back to the next meeting of the committee on 22 April 2004.
- (c) That members of the committee advise the Monitoring Officer of any specific comments they have on the consultation papers on local determination of misconduct action by Friday, 2 April 2004 to facilitate a report being brought to the meeting on 22 April 2004.
- (d) That the Standards Board link be placed on the Medway Council website.

Chairman

Date

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Committee Co-ordinator

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