
STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2010

Present:

Members of the Council

Councillors Barnes-Andrews, Osmond, Slade and Parnell

Independent Members

Mr B Hooper (Chair), Mr D Blake and Mr G Wilkinson

Apologies

Councillors Burke, Cunio and Sollitt

7. **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Mr Brian Hooper be elected as Independent Chair for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

8. **STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair reported that he had met with the Leader and Chief Executive in July and highlighted the main issues discussed:

- the potential impact of increased partnership working;
- Members Development, in particular Chairmanship of meetings; and
- Officers Scheme of Delegation.

9. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Governance Committee held on 24th June, 2010 be approved and signed as a correct record. (Copy of Minutes circulated with agenda and appended to the signed Minutes).

10. **AUDIT COMMISSION: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT 2009/10**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Internal Auditor requesting that the Committee consider the recommendations arising in relation to the Audit Commission's draft Annual Governance Report for 2009/10. (Copy of the report appended to the signed minutes).

The Committee noted that no audit work was outstanding. A revised letter of representation was tabled at the meeting. This included an additional paragraph on equal pay provision explaining that a figure had not been disclosed in the 2009/10 accounts as it was felt it would prejudice the Council's position in relation to the ongoing litigation.

The Committee also noted the issue of heating charges. It was explained that the error identified in electricity metres did not represent a material error within the accounts. No amendments would be made until further work had been undertaken. The Committee noted that Audit Commission was unable to complete the audit until this issue had been resolved.

A revised recommendation (i) was tabled at the meeting and agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Committee consider the matters raised in the report and delegates authority to the Chair of Standards and Governance Committee to approve and sign the financial statements before the statutory deadline of 30th September 2010;
- (ii) to note the adjustments to the financial statements set out in the report;
- (iii) that the letter of representation on behalf of the Council be approved before the Audit Commission issues their opinion and conclusion; and
- (iv) that the responses to the proposed action plan be approved.

11. **ANNUAL REPORT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS 2008-09**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Solicitor to the Council summarising the performance and issues arising out of the Annual Letter for 2009-10 from the Commission for Local Administration in England (Ombudsman), (Copy of the report appended to the signed minutes).

The Committee noted the letter from the Local Government Ombudsman acknowledged the Council had an excellent record of response times to complaints. The Committee expressed their thanks to officers in receiving the commendation from the Ombudsman.

12. **CORPORATE COMPLAINTS 2009/10**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Performance summarising performance and issues arising out of the Council's performance under the Corporate Complaint's Procedure for 2009/10. (Copy of the report appended to the signed minutes).

The Committee discussed the customer satisfaction surveys and the high level of dissatisfaction customers had in the manner the complaint had been dealt with. It was noted there was only a 19% return rate and it was difficult to establish why complainants were not satisfied because the surveys were anonymous. It was reported that work would be carried out to develop the questionnaires further.

13. **ANNUAL REPORT ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LEARNING/ HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS 2009-10**

The Committee received and noted a report of the Customer Care and Complaints Manager updating the Committee on the issues arising out of complaints made by the public to Children's Services and Learning and the Health and Adult Social Care Directorate during 2009-10, (Copy of the report appended to the signed minutes).