

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Minutes of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE which was open to the press and public, held at LEWISHAM TOWN HALL, CATFORD, SE6 4RU on WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

Present

Independent members: Gill Butler , Sally Hawkins and David Roper-Newman.

Councillors Julia Fletcher, Stella Jeffrey and Sam Owalabi- Oluyole.

Apologies received from Duwayne Brooks, Alan Hall, Pauline Morrison, Cathy Sullivan and Leslie Thomas

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MINUTES</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></p> <p>None was declared.</p>
3	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT</u></p> <p>Peter Gadsdon, Head of Strategy and Performance , Customer Services, presented the report which provided an update on all stages of the Council's complaints performance for 2010/11. A summary of the Independent Adjudicator's report and a summary of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual review was also considered.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted.</p>
4	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>COMPLIANCE WITH MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT</u></p> <p>Kath Nicholson, Head of Law and monitoring Officer presented the report and explained that the report provides information about the extent of compliance with the Member Code of</p>

Minute
No.

Action

Conduct.

RESOLVED that the report be noted;

the Council's Whistleblowing
Policy be amended as set out in
paragraph 8 and Appendix 2.

5 LOCALISM ACT 2011 – A BRIEFING BY THE
HEAD OF LAW

Kath Nicholson, Head of Law and Monitoring Officer gave a presentation on the ethical standards provisions of the recently enacted Localism Act 2011. Kath Nicholson confirmed that the non-voting co-optees will not be captured by the relevant provisions unless the adopted Member Code of Conduct says so.

Kath Nicholson also explained that we are currently awaiting Regulations which will set out the detail of the new legislative provision. i.e the definition of "pecuniary interests."

Kath Nicholson also explained that the Council's Constitution Working Party resolved that it would wish to keep some form of Standards Committee.

It was the general consensus of the Committee that the Council should maintain the standards in the current Member Code of Conduct on a voluntary basis unless there is good reason to depart from it.

In relation to investigations Kath Nicholson advised that in the light of the Localism Act 2011 we would revert to the position prior to 2000. There would be some flexibilities in the investigations procedure and there would not necessarily be a 3 stage process. The Council would be in a position to adopt a more flexible approach.

RESOLVED i) that the report be noted;

ii) the Council keep the Code unless good reason to depart from it;

iii) adopt an investigations procedure that promotes confidence and embodies flexibility; and

iv) officers bring more detailed reports on proposals for a new Code of Conduct and on proposals for the arrangements for the investigation of complaints at the appropriate time.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be arranged

The meeting ended at 8:45pm