



Minutes of the Standards Committee

26 November 2009

-: Present :-

Councillors Addis, Aiton, Doggett and Stocks

Town Councillors Killick and Lomas

Independent Members: Messers Bastow, Branch, Dalzell, Heath, Hutchinson
and Mrs Faryna

293. Apology.

An apology for absence was received from Town Councillor Henderson.

294. Minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 11 June 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

295. Communications.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he and one other Independent Member would be attending to observe the Council meeting on 10 December 2009.

296. Public Perception of Ethics.

The Committee noted Report 252/2009 which set out the key findings from research carried out by Standards for England on the 'public perceptions of ethics'. The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that work had been undertaken in the last few months to raise the importance of promoting trust and confidence in local Councillors. He further advised that the Local Democracy Act had received royal assent which imposes a duty upon Local Authorities to promote Local Democracy which the Monitoring Officer felt the Standards Committee was already undertaking.

297. Annual Review of Past Year and Proposed Future Strategy and Work Programme.

The Committee considered Report 252/2009 which set out a summary of work that the Standards Committee had undertaken during the past year and detailed the future work of the Standards Committee.

Members were informed that the Report would be presented to the Council meeting on 10 December 2009 for formal ratification. Members wished for Report 252/2009 to be amended by including the statistical data for the previous 12 months (from 31 October 2008) and for the following statement to be removed:

'The Committee will engage with other local organisations to promote ways of publicising clearly and comprehensively the range of governance arrangements in the Bay in order to promote transparency and accountability.' The Monitoring Officer advised Members that the list of sanctions as set out in Appendix 1 to Report 252/2009 had been updated in light of recently decided cases of the Adjudication Panel Tribunals.

Resolved

- i) that Appendix 1 to Report 252/2009 be approved; and
- ii) that subject to the amendments detailed above the Council be recommended to note the Future Strategy and Work Programme.

298. Gifts and Hospitality and Lobbying.

Members noted Report 253/2009 on recently issued guidance from Standards for England on gifts, hospitality and lobbying. Members requested that any such future guidance should be issued to Members in both the names of the Chairman and Monitoring Officer.

299. Research Report: Stakeholder Tracker 2009 (Satisfaction with the Standards Board for England and Attitudes to the Ethical Environment).

The Committee noted Report 254/2009, which set out the results of a quantitative survey of satisfaction with the Standards Board for England, attitudes to the ethical environment and in relation to changes to the ethical framework. The Report concluded that since the last survey in 2007 improvements had been made in many areas including overall satisfaction with the work of the Standards Board, proportions of stakeholders who speak highly of the Standards Board and perceptions that members' standard of behaviour has improved.

300. The Adjudication Panel.

Members received and noted Report 255/2009 which provided examples of cases where Adjudication Panel Tribunals had been undertaken and would aid Members of Torbay Council's Standards Committee in furthering its objective of making sound and equitable decisions. Members noted that during the last five months a greater number of decisions had been overturned or varied at appeal.

301. Assessment Made Clear: Local Assessment of Complaints.

Members watched a training DVD on local assessment of complaints produced by Standards for England.

Chairman
