

## Minutes

Standards Committee  
Monday, 1 March 2010  
Meeting held at Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



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Come into effect on: Immediately (or call-in date)

**Members Present:** Allan Edwards (Chairman), Malcolm Ellis (Vice-Chairman), James Keys (Independent member), Councillors Corthorne, Curling, Dann, Harmsworth, Hensley and Yarrow

**Officers Present:** Raj Alagh and Lloyd White

### 8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received from Councillor Khursheed

### 9. MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2009 be taken as a correct record.

### 10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest

### 11. CONFIRMATION THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THOSE MARKED PART II, IN PRIVATE

### 12. REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme for 2010 / 11 was reviewed and the dates of future meetings noted. It was agreed to add an item reviewing the training and induction of new Members to the meeting on 2 June. A report on the revised Code of Conduct for Members would be brought forward when and if this was issued by Parliament.

**RESOLVED:** That the work programme, as amended above, be approved.

### 13. STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND BULLETIN

The latest edition of 'The Bulletin' was noted and Members discussed in detail the advice it contained concerning 'Predisposition' and 'Predetermination'. It was felt that this would always remain a slightly grey area and one that would be hard to prove in an official complaint. If in doubt, Members were urged to contact the Monitoring Officer to discuss any issues of this sort. It was also noted that there was no system in place at the Council of an initial filtering of complaints by the Monitoring Officer

before being submitted to the Assessment Sub-Committee as this was not permitted by the legislation as it currently stood.

#### **14. RECENT STANDARDS NETWORKING EVENTS**

The Vice-Chairman provided Members with a detailed summary of the recent networking events held in Brent and at the GLA. These continued to be useful events for sharing experiences and gaining knowledge. It was pleasing to note that the processes and practices in use at Hillingdon were seen as being exemplary.

#### **15. MEMBER TRAINING POST MAY 2010**

Members noted the arrangements recently approved by the Whips' Committee for new Member induction post election and also for general Member training and seminar provision which would now be provided in two, half day sessions with a number of seminars and training events being held concurrently. Members were assured that essential training, on a range of subjects from across the Council would remain the priority.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

#### **16. STANDARDS AND ETHICS INDICATORS**

Members considered the contents of the annual report providing summary information on a range of topics by which to gauge the corporate health of the authority in relation to standards and ethics. In welcoming and noting the report Members were concerned that the quality and content of some of the returns was not always consistent and that officers should be reminded of what was expected and required when completing returns such as for declarations of interest at meetings and for declaring interests in contracts.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Head of Democratic Services ensure that the quality and content of the returns was complete and consistent in future.**

#### **17. DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

Members noted the content of the annual report to the Corporate Management Team concerning the declarations of Gifts and Hospitality to officers. In welcoming the report Members were concerned that the returns made were not always complete in describing what action had been taken in relation to the gift or hospitality. In particular three returns from the Education and Childrens' Services Directorate were queried:

- A gift of a DVD player – no indication of what was done with the gift
- A visit to India – no indication of reason for the trip
- A gift of alcohol – not authorised – and no indication of what happened to it.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Head of Democratic Services be requested to investigate the three declarations detailed above and provide the Members of the Committee with further details.**

## **18. COMPLAINTS MONITORING**

This item was discussed in Part II without the press or public present as it contained confidential information as defined in the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

The Committee noted details of all the complaints made against Members to date. In relation to the latest complaint it was noted that this had been dismissed and it was agreed that the wording used should be clearer to show the difference between this sort of case and one where the accusation had been upheld but no action taken. In addition officers apologised to Councillor Dann for not informing her of the reasons why she had not been asked to sit on the Assessment Sub-Committee for this case.