



Minutes

Name of meeting	ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date and time	THURSDAY, 20 MAY 2010 COMMENCING AT 9.30 AM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	<u>Independent Members:</u> Mr Mark Southwell (Chairman), Mr Anthony Brindle, Mr George Hibberd, Miss Liz Mackenzie, Mr Ray Smith, Mr Peter Tautz <u>Representative of Town and Parish Councils:</u> Mr Richard Day, Mr Ron Mew, Mr Denis Russell <u>Isle of Wight Council Members :</u> Cllrs John Howe, Heather Humby, Susan Scoccia, David Williams
Officers Present	Davina Fiore, Julie Martin, Chris Mathews
Apologies	Mr Keith Fagan

1. **Election of Chair**

RESOLVED :

THAT Mr Mark Southwell be elected Chairman of the committee for the ensuing year.

2. **Minutes**

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [22 February 2010](#) be confirmed.

3. **Election of Vice Chair**

RESOLVED :

THAT Mr George Hibberd be elected Vice Chairman of the committee for the ensuing year.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations received at this stage.

5. **Update from the Chairman**

The Chairman advised that he had nothing to report to the Committee at this stage.

6. **Reports of the Director of Corporate Services**

(a) Review of Assessment Criteria

The Monitoring Officer advised that the proposals for amendments to the criteria had previously been discussed by the Committee at an informal meeting. The Chairman advised that the aim of the revised criteria was to ensure a consistent approach across the decisions made by Assessment Sub Committees and the effectiveness of the criteria could be reviewed at a later date if necessary.

The committee gave consideration to concern that it may be difficult for Members to identify trends if they were not aware of previous complaints, for example around members not treating the public with respect. It was felt that the analyses of the complaints data that was considered at each meeting would enable the committee to identify any trends. The Monitoring Officer also advised that she, the Deputy Monitoring Officers and the Senior Democratic Services Officer had regular meetings to discuss possible trends and lessons learned from Assessment Sub Committee meetings. Officers would advise Assessment Sub Committees on consistency of approach to complaints.

The Chairman advised that he would include reference to the concern relating to lack of respect to the public in his summary in the Committee's Annual Report to Council.

There was some discussion as to whether information could be provided in the assessment criteria on the sanctions available under "other action" for recommendation by the Assessment Sub Committee, e.g. letters of apology, mediation, training or advice from the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer advised that information on sanctions available was provided in the training to members of the Ethical Standards Committee, but that refresher training on this would be provided at the next informal meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED :

THAT the amendments to the assessment criteria as set out in the report be confirmed.

(b) Annual Report

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Annual Report contained comment on the outcome of the Craven Court case and the lessons learned.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that typographical errors in the draft would be corrected.

RESOLVED :

THAT subject to a final check by all members for detailed points of accuracy the committees Annual Report to Council be approved.

(c) Initial Assessment Review and Report Back

The Monitoring Officer reported on the latest statistics following assessment of complaints against Members. Seven investigations were currently ongoing, of which two were complex cases which were referred for investigation over six months ago. It was expected that all seven cases would be completed by the autumn.

RESOLVED :

THAT the report be noted.

(d) Standards Bulletin 47

Members noted the latest issue of the Bulletin.

RESOLVED :

THAT the content of the Bulletin be noted.

7. Updates from Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that she had been invited to attend the Standards Board for England Annual Assembly in October 2010 to speak on investigations on the island. The Chairman and a Deputy Monitoring Officer would also attend the Assembly. The Monitoring Officer said that she would be able to give a version of presentation to Committee Members informally; specifically on the investigations process.

8. Workplan

Members noted the latest workplan. The Committee would next meet formally on 28 June 2010, with the next informal meeting expected to be in September.