



Minutes

Name of meeting	ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date and time	MONDAY, 21 JULY 2008 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	<u>Independent Members:</u> Mr M Southwell (Chairman), Mr B Claxton, Mr K Fagan, Mr G Hibberd, Mr P Tautz, Mrs S Tudor Smith <u>Representative of Town and Parish Councils:</u> Mr R Day, Mr R Mew, Mr D Russell <u>Isle of Wight Council Members :</u> Cllrs M Cunningham, H Humby, E Oulton
Officers Present	Davina Fiore, Julie Martin, Chris Mathews, Helen Miles
Apologies	Mr A Brindle, Cllr Muriel Miller

11. **Minutes**

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [30 June 2008](#) be confirmed.

12. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations received at this stage.

13. **Update from the Chair**

A Power to the Parish workshop was to be held on 4 September 2008 at Gurnard Pines, at which the Ethical Standards Committee had been offered a stand. The Chair asked for volunteers from the committee to man the stand for short periods of time throughout the day.

The Chair reported that he had been unable to attend the AGM of the Association of Town and Parish Councils but that Mrs S Tudor Smith had attended on his behalf. Although there were last minute changes at the meeting they were handled very well.

Two letters had been received from the Standards Board for England, one of which was an invitation to apply for the Standards and Ethics award category at the 2009 Local Government Chronicle awards.

Notification was also received from the Standards Board for England advising that the draft reports relating to several outstanding cases had been delayed, no new date had been given.

14. **Reports of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services**

(a) Local Filter – Issues to Date

The Head of Democratic Services advised the committee that to date nine complaints had been dealt with. Of those four related to Isle of Wight Councillors and the remaining five were relating to Parish/Town Councillors.

A slight problem had been identified with question eight of the assessment criteria used by the Assessment Sub Committee. It was therefore proposed to alter the wording slightly which would then move the position of question eight into the question seven slot.

There had been a query relating to the names of the committee members being released to members of the public. It was decided that the names should be provided if asked for. Members were advised that if they were subsequently approached by anyone in relation to the hearing they should contact the Monitoring Officer.

The quarterly data had been submitted to the Standards Board for England, although there had been a slight problem with the web site.

A question was asked as to whether other councillors knew of the assessment criteria. The committee was advised that once approved it would be put on the web site.

RESOLVED :

- (i) That the assessment criteria, as attached to the report as Appendix 1, be approved subject to criteria 8 be amended to read:

“If the complaint appears to be malicious or politically motivated or tit-for-tat does it still have substance?”

and its position be moved to criteria 7.

- (ii) That the assessment criteria was for the guidance of the Assessment Sub Committee and that it was the responsibility of the Sub Committee to take into account the facts of each particular case and to give reasons for any deviation from the criteria.
- (iii) That the criteria be further reviewed at the next meeting of the Committee.
- (iv) That, when requested, the names of the members of any particular Sub Committee meeting to deal with the initial assessment be released.

(b) Update on Ethical Audit Action Plan

Members were updated on the Ethical Audit Action Plan and were advised that the new Constitution had been agreed at a meeting of the Full Council on 16 July 2008.

There were some inconsistencies in the target date column which would be amended.

RESOLVED

THAT the completed Action Plan be noted.

(c) Training Update

Training had been put in place for the new Parish Councillors elected in May 2008. There had been positive feedback from the majority of councillors that attended.

There was some discussion relating to running training sessions for prospective candidates to give them an idea of what would be in store for them if elected.

RESOLVED :

THAT the report be noted.

(d) Standards Board Bulletin 39

Members noted issues within the Bulletin relating to the local assessment of complaints.

RESOLVED :

THAT the Bulletin be noted.

15. **Updates from Monitoring Officer**

The Monitoring Officer advised the committee that she had been invited to attend and speak at the next meeting of the Independent Members Forum due to be held in October 2008.

16. **Workplan**

The following additional items to be considered at the 15 September 2008 meeting :

Press Protocol
Local Government Chronicle Awards.

CHAIRMAN