



Minutes

Name of meeting	ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date and time	MONDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2010 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM
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, Ms 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

9. [Minutes](#)

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [20 May 2010](#) be confirmed.

10. [Declarations of Interest](#)

There were no declarations received at this stage.

11. [Update from the Chairman](#)

The Chairman advised that he had nothing to report to the Committee at this stage as the Localism Bill had not yet been published.

12. Reports of the Director of Corporate Services

(a) [Initial Assessment Review and Report Back](#)

The Monitoring Officer reported on the latest statistics following assessment of complaints against members. It was noted there was an error in Appendix 1, item (c) should read 30 Local Investigations not 29, and data as at 28 September 2010 should read seven investigations for Isle of Wight Councillors and not eight.

Members asked how many investigations had been completed within the original aim of six months and could those figures be included as part of the report in future? The Monitoring officer advised that she did not have those figures to hand but would provide it in the future.

The Monitoring Officer indicated that although the government had announced its intention to abolish the Standards for England regime the details were still awaited. However it was anticipated that this council may maintain a code of conduct for councillors, with a streamlined local process.

There was some discussion as to the breakdown and cost of investigations. Some of the investigators had been time recording and therefore an indicative cost could be provided but that would not include costs relating to assessment sub committees, members' allowances and time taken by the Committee and Scrutiny Team.

Members asked how big the pool of officers was that could undertake investigations and how disruptive was it to council business. Depending on the type of investigation it would normally be undertaken by someone from the Legal Department, Democratic Services Manager or the Corporate Information Unit. There had been no additional resources provided when the regime started, all the work was undertaken as part of the normal job, and would be prioritised accordingly.

There was some suggestion that the assessment criteria and value for money could be discussed at an informal training session. It was noted that the committee would have to be fairly tough minded when it came to referring items for investigation, as it may be a poor use of resources.

RESOLVED :

- (i) THAT the report be noted.
- (ii) THAT the assessment criteria and value for money issues be discussed at an informal training session.

(b) [Standards Bulletin 48](#)

Members noted the latest issue of the Bulletin. It was noted that Standards for England's view was that they were likely to be finally closed between December 2011 – March 2012, based on their estimation of the progress of the Localism Bill.

RESOLVED :

THAT the content of the Bulletin be noted.

(c) [Investigations Update](#)

The Monitoring Officer advised that of the 30 investigations being undertaken eight had now been closed. Six of those were no breach and two were found to be in breach with the sanction of censure. Of the other ongoing investigations a number of draft reports were out for comment.

13. [Updates from Monitoring Officer](#)

The Monitoring Officer indicated that once the Localism Bill proposals were known then the council could look at whether to implement a local code of conduct and if so what it would cover, what the process would be and whether it should be extended to the parishes and town councils.

14. [Workplan](#)

Members noted the latest workplan.

CHAIRMAN