

At a meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on FRIDAY, 29TH JANUARY, 2010 at 2.00 p.m.

Present:-

Mr. G.N. Cook in the Chair

Councillors M. Forbes, Tate and Wakefield, together with Councillors G.W.K. Hepple and A.R. Wilkinson (Hetton Town Council).

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Charlton and Wares and Messrs. J.P. Paterson and C. Stewart.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27th November, 2009 (copy circulated) were submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Matters Arising

The Chief Solicitor advised the Committee that there had been a third complaint received for 2009/10 which the Assessment Sub-Committee had decided he should investigate. A further complaint had recently been received, bringing the total to four for the year and a meeting of the Assessment Sub-Committee would be convened to consider what action to take. The Standards Committee would be informed in the Annual Report as to the final number of complaints received for 2009/10 and what action had been taken on them.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

Council Publicity – Guidance Note

The Chief Solicitor submitted a covering report and proposed guidance note for the Committee's approval (copies circulated), aimed at assisting Members and officers to ensure that all publicity materials issued and all promotional activity undertaken by the Council or the use of its resources, meets the standards set out in the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, the Code of Conduct for Members, and complies with the law.

(For copy report and guidance note – see original minutes).

The Chief Solicitor briefed the Committee on the guidance note drawing attention to where the guidance applied and did not apply as detailed in paragraph 3.2 of the report. He advised that he was proposing to circulate it to all Members, Chief Officers and Heads of Service following the approval of the Standards Committee, in order to provide clarity before the Council moved into the more sensitive time in the run up to the election.

In response to Councillor Wakefield, the Chief Solicitor advised that the guidance was based on the current Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authority Publicity and other agencies had their own protocols and guidance.

Members having considered the report and guidance note, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-
 - i) the guidance be noted and endorsed;
 - ii) copies of the Guidance Note on Council Publicity be sent to all Members of the Council, Chief Officers and Heads of Service; and
 - iii) the Council be recommended to formally adopt the Guidance Note on Council Publicity and that this be included in the Council's Constitution.

(Signed) G.N. COOK,
Chairman.