

At a meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on FRIDAY, 22ND MAY, 2009 at 1.00 P.M.

Present:-

Mr. G.N. Cook in the Chair

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

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Tate who was attending his first meeting as a member of the Committee.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Wares and Mr. C. Stewart.

Minutes

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

(For copy report – see original minutes).

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

Declarations of Interest

Item 5 – Protocol on Members' Business Dealings

Councillors Charlton and Tate declared personal interests as close associates of Councillors Paul and Susan Watson.

Activities for the Forthcoming Year

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) seeking the Committee's views on the scope of its activities for the forthcoming civic year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The City Solicitor briefed the Committee on the report. He advised that training of Members on any changes on the Code of Conduct would also be provided to Members of Hetton Town Council.

In response to Councillor Charlton who enquired about a timely reminder to Members about their responsibilities, the City Solicitor stated that training sessions would be provided early in the new municipal year. In addition to this, he advised that he wrote to Members on an annual basis detailing the interests that were recorded for them and requesting Members to make any necessary revisions. Members were also reminded of the need to make a revision whenever a change occurred during the course of the year.

In relation to further awareness raising, the City Solicitor advised that all agenda and reports of the Standards Committee could be viewed on the Council's website. The form on which to make a complaint could also be accessed via the Council's website. The City Solicitor informed the Committee that he would be looking to include an article on the work of the Standards Committee in the Council magazine 'Sunrise' to further promote and raise awareness of the role of the Committee and the importance of the ethical agenda with the public during the course of the year.

Councillor Charlton having also pointed out that reports from the Standards Committee were also submitted to Council for consideration and that in future an annual report would also be submitted which would further raise awareness of the work of the Committee; it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the proposed range of activities for the Standards Committee be endorsed.

Protocol on Members' Business Dealings

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) informing Members of a notification given to the Chief Executive in relation to the Ford and Hylton Club, which is leased from the Council by Councillor Paul Watson and Councillor Susan Watson, regarding the proposed assignment of the lease.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The City Solicitor and the Chairman confirmed that the request had been dealt with in accordance with the recently agreed procedure.

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Dates of Meetings of the Standards Committee 2009/2010

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) advising Members of the Committee of the dates of the Standards Committee meetings for the Municipal Year 2009/2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman commented that there may be a need to hold a meeting in January and that Members would be contacted if this was necessary.

The City Solicitor added that ad hoc meetings would be arranged should they be needed in addition to the diaried dates and that similarly if there was no business for the Committee to consider, following consultation with the Chairman, a meeting would be cancelled.

4. RESOLVED that the dates of the Standards Committee meetings for the Municipal Year 2009/2010 be noted.

(Signed) G.N. COOK,
(Chairman).