



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the **Standards Committee** held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 24 April 2012, Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP

Present: Councillors Danny Chalkley, Louise Hyams, Ruth Bush, Guthrie McKie, Alastair Moss and Tim Mitchell

Independent Member present: The Very Reverend Dr John Hall (Chairman), Lord Richard Best

Apologies: Councillors Ian Adams and Michael Brahams.

Independent Members: Mrs Liz Peace and Lord Dennis Stevenson

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no Declarations of Interest.

2. MINUTES

2.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2012 be approved.

3. LOCALISM ACT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS ARRANGEMENTS – FOLLOW UP REPORT (see report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

3.1 Peter Large, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, introduced the report. He explained that since the last meeting the LGA had issued a template of a Code of Conduct and associated guidance. The DCLG had also issued some illustrative text. Mr Large said that both of these documents were thin when compared with the existing Code, but this was a reflection of the changes brought in under the Localism Act. Mr Large advised that in his view the LGA Code would be the best starting point and its operation could be reviewed.

3.2 Mr Large referred next to the regulations relating to the registration of Pecuniary Interests. He explained that the relevant regulations had not yet been issued by the DCLG. In view of this and following discussion the Committee agreed that before determining what additional interests should be declared the regulations setting out statutory Pecuniary interests should be awaited.

- 3.3 The Committee, following discussion, endorsed the process for the dealing of allegations relating to a breach of the Code.
- 3.4 The Committee endorsed the view expressed at a previous meeting that the Code of Conduct and related Member conduct issues should continue to be considered by a separate Standards Committee.
- 3.5 The Committee felt that the suggested Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee were acceptable. The size of the Committee was important and should be sufficient to accommodate an appeal to be heard by a separate panel of Members.

RESOLVED: (1) That the LGA template be used as the basis of Council's Code of Conduct for Members but the finalised Code be deferred until details of the statutory Pecuniary Interests were known as this would allow consideration to be given to any additional requirements relating to the Registration of Interests to be included.

- (2) That the Committee note the arrangements for Member training in respect of any new Code of Conduct recommended, as outlined in Section 4 of this report;
- (3) That the Committee approve the process for dealing with allegations of breach of the Members Code of Conduct, as detailed in Section 7 of this report;
- (4) That the views of the Committee in respect of the composition of the Standards Committee as set out in paragraph 3.5 above be endorsed;
- (5) That the Committee note the new Standards Committee draft Terms of Reference attached as Appendix 5 and that this be recommended to the General Purposes Committee for recommendation to annual Council on 16th May 2012; and
- (6) That the arrangements set out in this report be fully reviewed after 6-9 months of operation.

7. CLOSE OF MEETING

- 7.1 The meeting ended at 7.23pm.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____