



# LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

## MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE Wednesday, 24 March 2010 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: John Mann (Chair), Rochelle Gelman (Vice-Chair) and Bessong, Councillors Colwill and J Moher

### 1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None.

### 2. **Welcome**

The committee welcomed Fiona Ledden to her first meeting following her appointment as Borough Solicitor.

### 3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 January 2010 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

### 4. **Matters arising**

#### *Planning Code of Practice Review*

The question was raised on how to ensure that all three members representing a ward were not mistakenly appointed to the Planning Committee and it was agreed that the political group offices would be reminded at the appropriate time.

### 5. **Annual Review of the Member Development Programme May 2009 - April 2010**

The Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager introduced the annual report which outlined activities undertaken since May 2009, feedback from members and constraints on the programme. She advised that the council would be going ahead with the e-learning package 'Modern Councillor' to start in September 2010. This could be part funded through the Capital Ambition Board. It was noted that member development training sessions would move from Thursdays to Mondays where possible at the request of the member development steering group. Attention was drawn to the programme of induction events to be delivered following the local elections in May 2010 which would include training on the Members' Code of Conduct.

The committee noted with concern that there were a significant number of occasions where members had failed to attend courses on which they had been booked, sometimes cancelling at short notice without reasons being given, resulting in a loss of money. It was agreed that a letter from this committee should be sent to the political group offices advising of this concern and reminding of the value of training in enabling them to properly fulfil their representative roles. In future, the committee would also wish to be notified of those members that had failed to attend external courses on which they had been booked. The committee agreed that feedback questionnaires should be completed for external courses. It was further agreed that independent members should be notified of training on offer so that they could consider attending. Elected members would continue to have precedence for places.

Members thanked the Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager for her interesting and informative report.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted.

#### **6. Standards for England Statistics**

The Borough Solicitor introduced the report which highlighted some of the statistics provided by Standards for England about the complaints received by the standards committees of local authorities. She referred to one of the reports that related to a complaint investigated by this authority and comments made therein by the Adjudication Panel which had been considered unhelpful. It had been clarified that no criticism of this committee had been intended and the Board were happy to discuss the matter further if thought necessary.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted.

#### **7. Annual Work Programme 2010/11**

Members considered the report which set out work carried out in the previous year and a proposed work programme for the municipal year 2010/11. The Borough Solicitor invited views on any items for inclusion. She advised of the intention to programme future reviews for earlier in the year and noted the request for the networking event to be scheduled for later in the calendar year if possible.

RESOLVED:

that the proposed work programme for 2010/11 be agreed.

#### **8. Sub-Committee membership changes**

None.

#### **9. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would be agreed by the annual meeting of the Full Council in May.

10. **Vote of thanks**

This being the last scheduled meeting of the committee for the municipal year before the local elections in May, the Chair on behalf of the committee thanked independent members and officers for their work and contributions. Members in turn thanked the Chair for the manner in which he had conducted business over the past years.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

JOHN MANN  
Chair