

**MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: John Mann (Chair, Independent Member), Rochelle Gelman (Vice-Chair, Independent Member) and Councillor Butt (for Councillor J Moher).

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Colwill and J Moher.

Sheila Darr (alternate Independent Member) also attended the meeting.

**1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

None declared.

**2. Deputations**

There were none.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009 be approved as an accurate record.

**4. Annual Review of Member Development Programme May 2008-April 2009**

The report from the Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager, Rhiannon Leary, reviewed the Member Development Programme. In introducing the report, she outlined the activities undertaken since May 2008, the feedback from members, and identified constraints on the programme. Consideration was also given to future development of the programme and to additional training opportunities for members which have arisen as a result of new legislation, such as the 'Councillor Call for Action'.

The committee noted that the member development budget had been reduced to £15,000 and the Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager confirmed that requests to attend courses were each considered on their merits. She assured that funding should be sufficient to meet induction arrangements for newly elected councillors in 2010. She was currently considering issuing guidance on external courses. The committee agreed that the independent members on the committee may benefit from having personal development plans and should be kept informed of future training events.

The committee thanked the Mayor's Office and Member Development Manager for her comprehensive report.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Annual Review of Member Development Programme report be noted;

- (ii) that the independent members on this committee be kept informed of training events.

**5. Standards Board for England Statistics**

The report from the Borough Solicitor highlighted some of the latest statistics provided by the Standards Board for England about the number of complaints received by the standards committees of local authorities, the number of matters investigated and the decisions that were made. Members noted that under the new arrangements in place, no complaints had been received in the first three quarters about Brent councillors however three had been received in the last quarter. The Standards Board's statistics reveal that a significant proportion of allegations across the country were not referred for investigation, more than in the previous year. The committee were pleased to note that Brent's statistics were relatively low in comparison with the rest of the country.

RESOLVED:-

that the report on the Standards Board for England's statistics be noted.

**6. Annual Work Programme**

This report set out the work of the Standards Committee over the past municipal year and also contained a proposed work programme for the committee for the forthcoming municipal year for 2009/10. The committee recalled the networking event hosted earlier in the year, with James Goudie QC as the main speaker, which had been well received and had also been a good opportunity to meet a wide range of elected and independent members. Consideration could be given to extending the opportunity to other boroughs however care should be taken to avoid the event becoming too large.

RESOLVED:-

that the proposed work programme for 2009/10 be agreed.

**7. Sub-Committee Membership Changes**

RESOLVED:-

that the following changes to the sub-committee memberships be approved:

**Standards Initial Assessment Sub-Committee**

<b>Member</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> alternate</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> alternate</b>
J MOHER	Butt	Beswick

## **Standards (Review) Sub-Committee**

**Member**  
BESWICK

**1<sup>st</sup> alternate**  
Butt

**2<sup>nd</sup> alternate**  
J Moher

### **8. Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be agreed at the Annual Meeting in May 2009.

### **9. Any other business**

There was none.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm.

J MANN  
Chair