

STANDARDS & ETHICS COMMITTEE

2 MAY 2006

Present: The Most Reverend Dr Barry Morgan (Archbishop of Wales/Bishop of Llandaff) (Chairperson),
David Hughes and Elaine Moore

Community Councillor David Suthers

County Councillors Griffiths, James and Owens

Observers: Anne Morgan, Maureen Hedley-Clarke and Paul Stockton

Also: Kate Berry (Monitoring Officer) and Val Davies
(Committee Services Officer)

Apology: Akmal Hanuk

S52 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

S53 : DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee discussed the content of the draft Annual Report, which had been prepared by the Task & Finish Group, appointed at the previous meeting.

The Committee generally agreed the content of the draft Annual Report subject to amendments to update the content of the report.

RESOLVED – That

(1) the Annual Report be updated to reflect the current position and to include the comments of the Committee;

(2) the revised Annual Report be circulated to the Committee for approval prior to submission to Council on 22 June 2006.

S54 : ETHICAL STANDARDS AUDIT

The Monitoring Officer updated the Committee on progress of the Ethical Standards Audit. The Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2006 considered a report and questionnaire on the Ethical Standards Audit and made a number of observations.

The Committee was advised that the comments had been taken on-board and the revised questionnaires had been circulated to all staff except teaching staff and to all Council Members.

A selection of 200 of the more significant organisations had also been circulated.

The closing date for return of the questionnaires was the 16 June 2006.

Consultation would also take place through the Focus Group.

The results of the Ethical Audit would be reported to the new Committee in July 2006.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

S55 : CARDIFF COUNTY COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Monitoring Officer introduced Kathryn Thompson, Operational Manager, Corporate Communications who had been invited to the meeting to give a presentation to the Committee on the new Council Website. The Committee was advised that the website had been re-designed to be more streamlined and more user focused and had the capability to be fully bilingual; to build in a transactional facility and report features.

The Committee was advised that although it was intended that the website would be fully bilingual there was still an amount of work to complete in respect of the Welsh language. The website had been launched to the Welsh Language Board and it was suggested that it should be showcased to the Welsh Assembly.

Welsh and English are inter-changeable on the new website and this was a significant achievement.

3.

The system was easy to use, it was possible to create an article on the website but in order to do this an authoriser would need to be appointed.

A brief demonstration was given to the Committee on navigating the site, in particular a search was carried out to locate information relating to the Committee. The Committee was also given an overview of the Council's site including how to search for agenda reports and minutes. Following the presentation the Committee discussed the new website and made a number of observations.

- It was suggested that an outline of the work and achievements of the current Standards and Ethics Committee be included on the new Website together with a position statement of the outgoing Committee whose term of office is due to end in July 2006.
- That an archive be included of the existing Committee together with information on the new Committee.
- The uniqueness of the Standards & Ethics Committee should be outlined.

In response to an observation made that information contained on the website was often out of date, the Committee was advised that it was mandatory to insert a date on any information placed onto the website and the information would be checked to ensure it was not obsolete. There was now a centralised team in the Communication Section as a point of contact.

- It was suggested to the Committee that a generic e-mail address be set up to allow people to forward questions to the Standards & Ethics Committee.

The Chairperson thanked Kathryn Thompson for her presentation on the website and for responding to the Committee's questions.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the presentation be noted;
- (2) should Members of the Committee have any suggestions in respect of the website these be forwarded to the Monitoring Officer.

S56 : PUBLIC INTEREST REPORT OF THE DISTRICT AUDITOR – MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES AND OFFICERS' REMUNERATION

For information, the Committee had been circulated with a copy of the report of the District Auditor on Members' Allowances and Officers' Remuneration.

The report gave a summary of the main findings of the District Auditor and outlined the recommendations that required action by the Council.

The Committee was advised that Officers were currently in the process of making the necessary arrangements in order to comply with the statutory requirements.

RESOLVED – That the Public Interest Report and the steps being taken by the Council in its response, be noted.

S57 : WORK PROGRAMME

The Monitoring Officer gave a brief summary of the Committee's work programme to July 2006.

It was noted that the work programme had a number of outstanding topics and might be subject to change when the new Committee was installed in July.

A discussion took place on the status of a number of the topics on the work programme, it was requested that issues relating to Council conduct and procedures remain on the work programme for future discussion.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the work programme be reviewed by the new Committee at its inaugural meeting;
- (2) a report be provided to the Committee in respect of existing Council protocols.

S58 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - To be arranged in July.