

STANDARDS & ETHICS COMMITTEE

15 APRIL 2008

Present: Independent Members: Akmal Hanuk (Chairperson),
Maureen Hedley-Clarke, Deirdre Jones, Anne Morgan
and Paul Stockton

Community Councillor David Suthers

County Councillors Griffiths, James and Owens

S131 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards & Ethics Committee held on 26 February 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson subject to the insertion of the word “**made**” to the first line on page 5 to read “The Committee **made** the following observations”

S132 : MEMBER/OFFICER COMPACT

The Committee at its meeting on 26 February 2008, discussed the Cardiff Undertaking and requested the Monitoring Officer to prepare a Member/Officer Compact setting out the key commitments which Members and Officers could expect from each other in their working relationships.

The Committee commended the COMPACT in particular the concise nature of the document. The Committee requested the inclusion of an additional bullet point to incorporate equality and fairness in how information is shared with Members in cross-party wards and when there is Member involvement in wards other than those they represent.

RESOLVED – That the Member/Officer COMPACT as amended at the meeting, be commended for use in the induction programme for new Members of Cardiff Council; and circulated to Officers.

S133 : MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Committee as part of its Work Programme has consistently supported a more focussed approach to Member Development and were pleased to

note that an overarching Member Development Strategy had recently been approved by the Executive and will be used as a framework for supporting Members in the numerous roles they are expected to undertake.

The Strategy provides for future Member Development activity to be organised on the following themed basis:-

- Induction
- Mandatory development
- Role specific development
- Basic skills/knowledge

The Monitoring Officer gave a brief outline of the proposed induction for new Members post election and advised that following the initial induction, it was the intention that in addition to general training, a focussed training programme would be provided for Members particularly those who sit on Regulatory Committees such as Planning and Licensing.

The Committee welcomed the report and made the following observations:-

- The Committee supported the view that Committee based training, particularly for those Members who sit on Regulatory Committees is essential;
- There is insufficient emphasis in the report on equality of access to opportunities for training and this should be addressed.
- Training for Community Councillors was discussed, it was confirmed that it was intended that separate training be offered to Community Councillors on the Model Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the Member Development Strategy be commended;
- (2) that a schedule of the training be circulated to the Committee in due course.

S134 : NEW CODE OF CONDUCT

The Committee received a report updating them on the revised Statutory

Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer advised that it is mandatory for all Councils to adopt the Code, however, it is possible for additions to be inserted locally which go beyond the statutory requirements. None of the mandatory provisions can be excluded.

Some of the key changes to the Code are in respect of the following areas:-

- (a) Disclosure of Personal Interests;
- (b) Exemptions and Dispensations;
- (c) Duty of uphold the Law;
- (d) Respect for others.

An outline was given of the timescales for implementation of the new Code with a recommendation that the Authority adopts the new Code at it's Annual General Meeting on 15 May 2008, a few days after the assumption of office of the newly elected Members following the local Government elections on 1 May 2008.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the Local Authority's (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2008, together with the timescale for implementation be noted;
- (2) Council be recommended to adopt the Model Code with effect from 15 May 2008;
- (3) Council be recommended to make it a mandatory requirement for all Members of the Council to attend a workshop on the new Code of Conduct within 3 months of adoption of the Code by Council.

S135 : MONITORING OFFICER'S VERBAL UPDATE

- (i) Community Council Representative – The Monitoring Officer advised that sadly the term of office of Community Councillor David Suthers would shortly be coming to an end as the Regulations only allow for two terms of office or part thereof. The Council is obliged to consult Community Councils with a view to seeking a new nomination, however, Community Councils will not be able to make nominations until after the elections; and Council will then need to make the new appointment. The possibility of co-opting Community Councillor David Suthers until the new appointment is made was

being explored.

- (ii) Cardiff Undertaking – Committee at its last meeting made some minor amendments to the wording of the Cardiff Undertaking, the Monitoring Officer advised that the Undertaking had been forwarded to Party Leaders and Whips for circulation to their Members for comments. The general view of the Leaders was that this was a good document. The Undertaking together with the new Code of Conduct would be taken to the Annual General meeting of Council in May 2008.
- (iii) Whistleblowing – The Monitoring Officer advised that a Communications Project Plan had been drawn up to publicise the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure. Discussions had been ongoing with Communications in respect of the poster campaign, however they had advised producing an information film instead, which would be provided free of charge. It was agreed to review this matter at the next Committee meeting.
- (iv) Exempt Items to Committee – The Monitoring Officer advised that due to pressures of work prior to the election, this information had not yet been compiled.

The update was noted.

S136 : EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS COMMITTEE- BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY

At its meeting on 29 January 2008 the Committee considered an urgent report on a breach of confidentiality arising out of the deliberations of the Employment Conditions Committee in September and October 2008 relating to the remuneration of the Chief Executive, following which, the Monitoring Officer was instructed by the Committee to undertake an internal investigation into the matter.

At its meeting on 26 February 2008 the Committee instructed the Monitoring Officer to continue with the investigation and to report on her findings. To date the investigation had not been concluded and a report would be submitted in due course.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted and a final report be submitted in

due course once the investigation had been concluded.

S137 : ANNUAL REPORT

At its meeting on 26 February 2008 the Committee decided to meet as a task and finish group to discuss the content and format of its 2007/08 Annual Report.

The 2007/08 Draft Annual Report was considered by the Committee and following discussion a number of amendments were suggested.

RESOLVED – That subject to the inclusion of the Committee's observations, the 2007/08 Draft Annual Report be finalized for approval of the Committee prior to its submission to Council at its meeting in June 2008.

S138 : GOVERNANCE REPORT FROM NOVEMBER 2007

At its meeting on 27 November 2007, the Committee received a report that provided them with an analysis of the work undertaken in the Council following the recommendations of the Cardiff Commission on Corporate Governance.

At its meeting on 26 February 2008 the Committee agreed to review the report and make recommendations (if any) to Council to be taken on board at the start of the new Administration.

RESOLVED – That the report and recommendations be noted and that the arrangements made to comply with Recommendation 38 of the Governance report (regarding arrangements for cross-party sharing of confidential information) be kept under review.

S139 : WORK PROGRAMME 2007/08

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme for 2007/08 be noted, and updated as agreed at the meeting.

S140 : CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairperson advised the Committee that a number of elected Committee Members would be leaving as they were approaching the end of

their terms of office; and that this was the last meeting that Community Councillor David Suthers and County Councillors Owens and James would be attending.

The Chairperson and the Committee thanked the retiring Members for their hard work and their commitment during their time on the Committee and wished them well for the future.

The Retiring Members responded and thanked the Committee and the Officers for their support and wished the Committee every success for the future.