

STANDARDS & ETHICS COMMITTEE

24 JUNE 2008

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

Community Councillor David Suthers

County Councillors Bowen, Davies and Rowland-
James

Apologies: Paul Stockton

S1 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards & Ethics Committee held on 15 April 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

S2 : REGISTRATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

At its meeting on 18 September 2007 the Committee resolved to recommend to Council the reduction of the threshold for registration of gifts and hospitality to £25.

The Council at its meeting on 18 October 2007 considered the matter and resolved to reduce the threshold for registration of gifts and hospitality to £25 in accordance with the Standards & Ethics Committee's recommendation and to amend the Council's Guidance accordingly.

The Committee agreed to review the matter by receiving a six monthly report summarising details of gifts and hospitality received by Members following the reduction of the threshold.

Following discussions, it was the consensus that all Members of the Council be required to register gifts and hospitality.

RESOLVED – That the information provided on the registration of Members' gifts and hospitality during the six month period following the

reduction of the threshold to £25 be noted and a further report be submitted in six months time.

S3 : MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Committee as part of its Work Programme has consistently supported a more focused approach to Member Development and previously considered the overarching Member Development Strategy that was approved by the Executive in March 2008.

The Committee received a report updating Members on the wide ranging Member Development Programme for 2008/09 that had been developed to assist existing and new Members in becoming fully equipped with the necessary qualities and information to enable them to fulfil their role as Councillors and would be reviewed annually to reflect the training needs of Members.

The Committee had previously discussed training on the Code of Conduct and were pleased to note that the module on the new Members' Code of Conduct was a mandatory part of the Programme for all Members.

The Committee was advised that the aim of the training on the new Model Code briefly outlined the relevant legislation to enable Members to understand the application of the statutory and ethical framework within which decisions need to be made, in particular:-

- Concepts of personal and prejudicial interests and the relationship with the reputation of the Council;
- Declarations and Dispensations
- Complaints procedures;
- The roles of the Ombudsman, Standards and Ethics Committee and the Monitoring Officer.

Following consideration of the report the Committee made the following observations:-

- the Committee was pleased to hear that there had been a positive response to the training in particular that training specifically tailored

to Members on Regulatory Committees had been mandatory and well attended;

- in respect of providing training on the Code for Community Councils, it was confirmed that similar training would be made available to Clerks and Community Councillors in due course.

RESOLVED – That following discussion the Member Development Programme be noted.

S4 : PRESENTATION ON NEW ADMINISTRATION

The Committee was given a brief presentation on the composition of the new Administration following the elections.

A document entitled “A Capital Vision” was circulated to the Committee for information, the document sets out the new Administration’s policy aspirations and vision of the Council over the next four years.

The Committee noted that the document was currently a ‘no-status’ working document and that the document together with the Corporate Plan would be reported to the Executive Business meeting in July 2008.

RESOLVED – That the information presented on the composition of the new Administration and the Executive’s document entitled “A Capital Vision”, together with the protocol for the Executive Members on Collective Responsibility, attached to the report at appendix 2, be noted.

S5 : MONITORING OFFICER’S VERBAL UPDATE

- (i) Community Council Representative – The Monitoring Officer advised that Community Councillor David Suthers would remain on the Committee as a co-opted member pending his replacement. Nominations had been sought from Community Councils and a further update would be given on progress at the next meeting of the Committee.
- (ii) Whistleblowing Publicity – The Committee was advised that there would be a detailed article in the “Our News” publication setting out information on use of the policy, and contact details. The Committee

was advised that the Council's Intranet Site now has an 'inbox' facility, the 'Inbox' includes a moving DVD with questions and answers. An article advising that the Whistleblowing Policy had been revised will shortly appear in the Capital Times.

- (iii) Standards Conference (Wales) – The Committee was advised that the Standards Committee (Wales) Conference was scheduled to take place on 12 September 2008 at Aberystwyth and nominations to attend were invited.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

S6 : ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received its published Annual Report for 2007/08, the Committee endorsed the report to be presented by the Chairperson to the July meeting of Council.

S7 : WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee discussed its Work Programme for 2008/09 and made a number of observations in respect of topics for consideration over the forthcoming year.

- Reference was made to the possibility of Cardiff hosting a national/international conference in the future; it was agreed that a paving report be placed on the agenda for a future meeting and included in the Committee's Work Programme for discussion.
- Community Councils – at its meeting in November 2007 the Committee met with representatives of the Community Councils, it was agreed at that meeting that the Community Councils be invited to future meetings of the Committee. It was confirmed that relevant training on the Code would also be provided to the Community Councils.

The Committee suggested that it would be timely to invite Community Council representatives to a meeting in the Autumn.

- Following discussions it was agreed that representatives from the Media/Communications Team be invited to the December meeting of

the Committee.

- Attendance at meetings by Members of the Standards & Ethics Committee – it was suggested that this practice should re-commence, in particular, that independent members should attend a number of Planning meetings and provide a feedback report to the Committee for discussion.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2008/09 be noted and updated in accordance with the suggestions of the Committee;
- (2) a paving report on the feasibility of Cardiff hosting a national/international conference be prepared for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.