

Standards Committee

Date	12 December 2007
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Mr D D E Birchall (Chairman) Brenda Ackers, Harold Butler, Howard Henshaw A D K (Malaysia).
Other Councillors	None
Officers	Ian Curtis

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

2. New parish member

The chairman welcomed Councillor Harold Butler, who had been newly appointed as a parish member, to the committee.

3. Work plan for 2008/9

The monitoring officer presented a report setting out suggested matters that a work plan for the committee for the municipal year 2008-9 could address. The matters included training on the new code of conduct, officers' declarations of interests, local filtering of complaints, standards awareness in parish councils and procedure and etiquette at meetings of Fylde Borough Council. Members discussed the detailed work that the plan could include within each of these headings.

The meeting RESOLVED to instruct the monitoring officer to prepare a draft work plan to include the matters discussed for presentation at and possible approval by the next meeting of the committee.

4. Case reviews

Members considered a number of reports about complaints that had been investigated by ethical standards officers in relation to other councils. The chairman expressed the wish that the monitoring officer continue to bring such reports to future meetings, but without including the decisions. This would enable the committee to consider what decisions they may have reached on the same facts and compare them with those of the ethical standards officer.

Members RESOLVED to note the cases.

5. Complaints to the Standards Board: Statistics

The monitoring officer presented a statistical analysis of complaints made to the Standards Board for England about members of Fylde Borough Council and parish councils within Fylde since the date of the last meeting. There had been four such complaints. None of the complaints had been referred for investigation.

The meeting RESOLVED to note the report.

6. Independent members

The monitoring officer verbally reported that the committee needed to appoint a further independent person to be compliant with the Local Government Act 2000. The forthcoming delegation of initial filtering of complaints and government guidance strongly suggested that at least one more additional independent person would also be needed to allow the committee to meet its new obligations. The monitoring officer sought members' comments on a procedure and documentation that could be used in the recruitment process. The formal appointment of independent persons to the committee could only be done by a meeting of Fylde Borough Council.

Members ENDORSED the suggested procedure and documentation for discussion with the leader and opposition leader of Fylde Borough Council.