



Standards Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday 3 February 2010 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A, Tooley Street, London SE1 2TZ

PRESENT: Mark Roelofsen (Chair) – Independent member
Councillor Paul Bates
Councillor Michelle Holford
Councillor David Hubber
Councillor Robert Smeath
Councillor Linda Manchester (Reserve)
Peter Bibby – Independent member
Bola Ogun – Independent member

OFFICERS: Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance
Graham Love, Head of Democratic Services
Norman Coombe, Principal Lawyer, Governance Team
Andrew Weir, Constitutional Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dora Dixon-Fyle, James Barber and Mackie Sheik and independent member Wendy Golding.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The members listed as present were confirmed as the voting members.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the open minutes of the meetings held on 14 October 2009 and 23 November 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair, subject to Peter Bibby and Bola Ogun being added to the list of attendees for the meeting on 14 October 2009.

6. CIVIC AWARDS - CATEGORIES AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The head of democratic services presented the introductory report to the civic awards, categories and eligibility criteria.

Representatives from the Civic Association then addressed the committee and presented their proposals for the categories and eligibility criteria.

The committee asked questions of the Civic Association representatives.

The committee had some concerns regarding the Mayor's Discretionary Award and asked that the title of the award should be changed to the Mayor's Award. Members also asked that officers explore safeguards in place in other boroughs to ensure that the award would be politically neutral and that guidance be given to the Mayor prior to the Mayor making a nomination for the award.

The committee also expressed concern that the Civic Association had experienced problems when trying to promote civic awards in Southwark Life and in the John Harvard Library, where there was no public notice board available.

The committee asked that the information on reasons for nominations given to the committee be more standardised than in past years. The Civic Association representatives advised they would endeavour to ensure that this request was fulfilled.

Both the standards committee and the Civic Association representatives agreed that it had been productive to meet to discuss civic awards matters and would continue to do this each year going forward.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee received the recommendations of the Civic Association for the categories and eligibility criteria for civic awards and agreed the recommended categories and eligibility criteria subject to:
 - i) The Mayor's Discretionary Award being renamed the Mayor's Award.
 - ii) That officers explore safeguards in place in other boroughs to ensure that the Mayor's Award will be politically neutral and that the Mayor be given guidance on making any such award.
2. That relevant officers be called to attend the next meeting of the committee in order to resolve the problems the Civic Association had experienced when trying to promote civic awards in Southwark Life and in the John Harvard Library.

7. AMENDMENT TO THE LOCAL FILTER PROCEDURES RULES

The committee received a report from the principal lawyer, governance team on the amendment to the local filter procedure rules.

Members asked questions of officers and expressed their concerns over the current, overly bureaucratic structure of the standards regime, as sanctioned by Standards for England.

Officers advised that the council had to comply with the guidance from Standards for England.

RESOLVED:

1. That the standards committee noted the report.
2. That the standards committee agreed to amend the local procedure rules as shown in appendix A of the report.
3. That the committee asked that its concerns over the current, overly bureaucratic structure of the standards regime, as set out in the guidance from Standards for England, be noted.

8. PRESENTATION

The committee received a presentation from the monitoring officer on the current standards regime.

The presentation covered a number of issues including, the number of complaints nationally, the outcomes of complaints nationally, the level of bureaucracy and cost of the current system and some possible amendments to the current system.

Members asked questions of the monitoring officer and advised that they felt that more power should be given to monitoring officers to filter complaints.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the work programme.

Officers advised that the whistle blowing report may not be ready for the March.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee noted the work programme.
2. That the following items be added to the work programme:
 - i) Changes to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the

role of the standards committee

- ii) The new appeals process for politically restricted posts
- iii) Guidance for the Mayor's Award
- iv) Post election roundup of issues in which the committee may be interested

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in category 7c of paragraph 10.4 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Southwark Constitution.

The following is a summary of the decisions taken in the closed section of the meeting.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the closed minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

The meeting ended at 8.38pm.

CHAIR:

DATED: