



## Standards Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday 10 March 2010 at 7.00 pm at Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

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- PRESENT:** Mark Roelofsen (Chair)  
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle  
Councillor James Barber  
Councillor David Hubber  
Councillor Chris Page (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  
Robin Campbell, Head of Communications  
Pam Usher, Library Service Manager  
David Watkins, Skills for Life Manager (Libraries)  
Andrew Weir, Constitutional Officer
- OTHERS:** Gary Magold, Civic Association  
Anne Wolfe, Civic Association

### PART A - OPEN BUSINESS

#### 1. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

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

#### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Bates, Robert Smeath and Michelle Holford and independent members Wendy Golding and Chris Gurney.

#### 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 meeting held on 3 February 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

#### **6. CIVIC AWARDS 2010**

The committee considered the open and closed reports (see items 6 and 10).

Before hearing from the Civic Association regarding the civic awards nominations the committee heard from Robin Campbell, head of communications and Pam Usher, library service manager.

The head of communications and the library service manager advised that they would work with the Civic Association to promote civic awards in a number of ways such as putting publicity in Southwark Life, information on the council's webpage and posters on library notice boards. Additionally the contact details of relevant officers were given to the civic association.

The Civic Association representatives welcomed this support and advised the committee that this would be extremely helpful.

The Civic Association addressed the committee and presented the nominations for the Civic Awards and the Mayor's Award.

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the standards committee considered the recommendations of the Civic Association for nominations for civic awards and granted the civic awards as nominated.

That the standards committee considered the nomination from the Mayor for a discretionary award and granted the award as nominated.

That officers arrange for the Civic Association representatives to meet with any new committee members in order that there is an understanding as to what the role of the Civic Association is.

#### **7. POLITICALLY RESTRICTED POSTS**

The committee heard from Norman Coombe, principal lawyer, governance team. He advised the committee that due to changes in legislation that the standards committee would be responsible for hearing any appeals in relation to politically restricted posts.

Members asked questions and there was a brief discussion on what the committee would be required to do.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the standards committee noted the issues outlined in the report.
2. That the standards committee agreed to form a sub-committee to carry out the required functions and instructed the monitoring officer to draft procedure rules.

**8. STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND ANNUAL RETURN**

The committee heard from Norman Coombe, principal lawyer, governance team. He advised that officers had brought the draft Standards for England annual return to the committee for members' comments.

Members asked questions of officers and there was a discussion on the merits of the committee producing an annual report.

Although members were mainly of the view that it was not a good use of resources to spend time producing an annual report, there were concerns that the Audit Commission would not look favourably on this and that this could impact on the score received from the Audit Commission in relation to the use of resources for governance.

Deborah Collins, strategic director of communities, law and governance advised the committee that Standards for England had made it clear to the Audit Commission that an annual report from a standards committee was not mandatory.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the standards committee noted the draft annual return in appendix A.
2. That the answer to point 1 of the annual return be expanded to include the good work that has been done on the standards committee section of the council's website to inform the wider public, as well as officers within the council, on the good work the committee has carried out to promote high ethical governance standards.
3. That officers obtain absolute clarification from the Audit Commission that they will not mark the council down on its use of resources for governance score, should the committee decide not to produce an annual report.
4. That officers bring back information to the next committee meeting, including other authorities' practices in relation to standards committee's annual reports and clarification from the Audit Commission in order that the committee can decide whether there should be a standards committee annual report.

## **9. WORK PROGRAMME**

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the committee noted the work programme.
2. That the following items be added to the work programme:
  - Consideration of whether there should be a Standards Committee Annual Report
  - Civic Awards joint meeting (October 2010)
  - Arrangements for Standards Annual Assembly 2010

## **PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS**

## **10. CIVIC AWARDS 2010**

This report contained details of nominations for Civic Awards. This was considered by the committee when it dealt with item 6 on the open agenda. The decision relating to this item is set out in item 6 of the minutes.

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**