Standards Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Standards Committee held on Monday 5 March 2012 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02C - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:
Peter Bibby – Independent Member
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor David Hubber (in the chair)
Councillor Michael Mitchell
Councillor Helen Morrissey

OTHERS PRESENT:
Deborah Collins, strategic director of communities, law & governance
Stephen Douglass, head of community engagement
Norman Coombe, principal lawyer, governance team
Andrew Weir, constitutional officer
Alec Cormack, Southwark Civic Association
Anne Wolfe, Southwark Civic Association

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

In the absence of the chair the committee was asked to nominate a chair for the meeting. Councillor David Hubber was nominated by Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle and seconded by Councillor Gavin Edwards.

Apologies

There were apologies for absence from independent members Mark Roelofsen, Wendy Golding and Bola Ogun and Councillor Tim McNally.

Confirmation of voting members

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

Disclosures of interests and dispensations

There were none.
Notification of any items of business which the chair deems urgent

There were none.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2012 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the chair.

3. CIVIC AWARDS 2012

Members heard an introduction from Stephen Douglass, head of community engagement.

Members then heard from Anne Wolfe and Alec Cormack from the Civic Association.

At 7.15pm, it was moved, seconded and approved that the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in categories 1 and 2 of paragraph 10.4 of the access to information procedure rules of the Southwark constitution. The committee considered the report in closed session.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee considered the recommendations of the Civic Association for nominations for Civic Awards and granted the awards as appropriate subject to amendments.

2. That the committee considered the nomination from the Mayor for a discretionary award and granted the award as appropriate.

4. TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE STANDARDS REGIME

The committee heard from Norman Coombe, principal lawyer, governance team.

The principal lawyer advised that there was still uncertainty regarding a number of issues as no commencement order or regulations had been produced to date.

The committee were asked to consider a number of matters:

1. Whether the new committee should have co-opted members.

2. Whether, subject to agreement from Lambeth, there is a joint selection process for the position of independent person.

3. Whether members should be part of the selection process.
4. Whether to delegate the monitoring officer to undertake the selection process of the independent person, either jointly with Lambeth or as a single borough.

The committee heard from Deborah Collins, strategic director of communities, law & governance, who advised that a draft code for members from the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors had been produced and handed to the Local Government Association board for consideration.

The principal lawyer advised that once the new standards regime was in place, there would be a new standards committee, which would be an ordinary committee. As such the rules of proportionality would apply.

The strategic director suggested that when the new standards regime comes into place that there should be two independent persons: one new independent person and an individual who had been an independent member. The individual who had previously been an independent member would be in the position for one year to assist the new independent person during the transition period.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee noted the issues outlined in the report.

2. That the committee agreed that the new committee should have co-opted members.

3. That the committee decided, subject to agreement from Lambeth, there is a joint selection process for the position of independent person.

4. That the committee decided that a member from each political group and an independent person should be part of the selection process.

5. That officers discuss with independent members whether they wish to apply for the independent person role for one year or take part in the selection process.

6. That the committee delegated the monitoring officer to undertake the selection process of the independent person, either jointly with Lambeth or as a single borough.

5. UPDATE ON CHANGES TO THE STANDARDS REGIME

The discussions relating to this item were covered in item 4: Transitional arrangements for the proposed changes to the standards regime.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The clerk advised that the next meeting date for the committee would be on 24 April 2012.
RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

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 categories 1 and 2 of paragraph 10.4 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Southwark Constitution.

7. CIVIC AWARDS 2012

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

That the committee considered the closed information relating to this item (see item 3 for the decision).

The meeting ended at 8.05pm.

CHAIR:

DATED: