STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on Wednesday, March 25 2009 at 7.00pm at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Mark Roelofsen (Chair – Independent Member)

Councillors James Barber, David Hubber, Linda Manchester, Chris Page, Lewis Robinson and Robert Smeath.

Independent Members Peter Bibby, Chris Gurney and Bola Ogun.

OFFICERS: Graham Love, head of democratic services, Norman Coombe, principal lawyer, governance team, John Howard, head of organisational development and Andrew Weir, constitutional officer.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle and Michelle Holford and Independent Member Wendy Golding.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

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

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS AS URGENT

The following items were tabled at the committee but were not accepted as urgent items:

- Review of Communications Protocol
- Member and Officer Protocol

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Lewis Robinson declared a personal interest in the civic awards item as an individual he had nominated for an award was listed.

RECORDING OF MEMBERS’ VOTES
Committee and community councils procedure rule 1.8 (4) allows a member to record her/his vote in respect of any motions and amendments. Such requests are detailed in the following minutes. Should a member’s vote be recorded in respect to an amendment, a copy of the amendment may be found in the minute file and is available for public inspection.

The committee considered the items set out on the agenda, a copy of which has been incorporated in the minute file. Each of the following paragraphs relates to the item bearing the same number on the agenda.

5. MINUTES (see agenda pages 1-6 )

RESOLVED: That the open minutes of the meetings held on February 12 2009 and march 4 2009 be agreed and signed by the chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

6. CIVIC AWARDS (see agenda pages 7-9)

The committee considered a report of the strategic director of legal and democratic services regarding the report on civic awards 2009.

Members discussed the process of making nominations and expressed that they felt that the process should be reviewed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the standards committee considered the nominations for civic awards made by the Southwark Civic Association as set out in a closed report distributed separately, and made such awards as it thought fit.

2. That should any of the nominations raise cause for concern, once all financial and legal checks of nominees had been made, the strategic director of legal and democratic services be delegated authority to make the final decision on an award as has been done in the past.

3. That the constitutional steering panel consider proposals for the reform of the civic awards to go to council assembly. These proposals should consider the following:

   • Detachement of the civic award association from the council including the responsibility for operating civic awards
   • Improving the reporting of recommendations to standards committee including evidence of decisions
   • Having defined award categories with set criteria
   • Ensuring that eligibility criteria be clear

4. That the standards committee receive a report at the meeting on July 1, outlining proposals for the reform of the civic awards.
7. **COMMUNITY COUNCILS PROTOCOL** (see agenda pages 10-16)

The committee received a report of the strategic director of legal and democratic services.

Members discussed the proposed community councils protocol and asked questions of officers.

After some discussion the committee agreed to some amendments to the protocol.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the committee noted the proposed community council protocol and considered its inclusion in the protocols section of the constitution.

2. That changes to this protocol be agreed by the Monitoring Officer and are noted as such in paragraph 1.5(b) of the constitution subject to the following additional paragraphs:
   - A paragraph addressing the need for reports to community councils need to be cleared through the appropriate channels and presented to members in a timely manner to enable members to give adequate consideration.
   - A paragraph addressing the need for officers to support members of the community when they are addressing their concerns and ideas at community council meetings.

8. **MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND POLICY STATEMENT** (see agenda pages 17-31)

The committee received a report from the head of organisational development.

The committee was advised that this was a member led strategy to ensure effective development for all members.

The committee advised that they were satisfied with the document.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the committee noted the proposed strategy and policy statement in appendix A.

2. That the strategy and policy statement be referred back to group leaders for noting instead of full council.

9. **DECISION TRACKING UPDATE**

The committee received a report of the strategic director of legal and democratic services.

The head of democratic services advised the committee of the benefits of the new decision tracking system and informed the committee as to the progress being made in implementing the system.

Members asked a number of questions regarding the decision tracking system and officers advised on these points.
Members raised the point of publishing members’ interests and committee attendance records and the timescale for doing this.

RESOLVED: 1. That the committee notes the progress regarding the implementation of a new council-wide decision tracking system.

2. That members agree to receive further reports relating to options and system configuration that will require member decisions.

10. REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL (see separately tabled document)

The review of the communications protocol report was tabled.

The committee agreed that this report should be brought back to a special meeting of the standards committee to be considered.

RESOLVED: That the review of the communications protocol be brought back to a special meeting of the standards committee to be considered.

MEMBER AND OFFICER PROTOCOL (see separately tabled document)

The member and officer protocol report was tabled.

The committee agreed that this report should be brought back to a special meeting of the standards committee to be considered.

RESOLVED: That the member and officer protocol be brought back to a special meeting of the standards committee to be considered.

9. WORK PROGRAMME (see page 28 of agenda)

Members discussed the work programme

It was agreed that a report on the decision tracking system be added to the rolling list on the work programme and that the communications protocol and member officer protocol reports be added to the work programme to be programmed.

RESOLVED: That the standards committee agreed the work programme subject to the following amendments:

- that the decision tracking system report be added to the rolling list on the work programme.
- that the review of communications protocol report be added to the work programme and that a special meeting to consider this report be programmed.
- that the member and officer protocol report be added to the work programme and that a special meeting to consider this report be programmed.
PART B – CLOSED AGENDA

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of paragraph 10.4 of the access to information procedure rules of the constitution.

1. CIVIC AWARDS 2009

The standards committee considered the closed information regarding this item. See item 6 of the open minutes for decision.

The meeting ended at 9:59 pm.

CHAIR:

DATED: