

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON WEDNESDAY, 14 JULY 2004**

**MEMBERS**

\* Mr I Stolliday - Chairman

∅ Cllr G Date

\* Dr L Durman

\* Cllr P J Prudden

\* Mr M Winterton

\* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

**S.1/04 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 April 2004 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the correct spelling of Dr Durman's name, and signed by the Chairman.

**S.2/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none were declared.

**S.3/04 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Members were asked to consider a report which invited the Committee to adopt a complaints procedure for dealing with referrals from the Standards Board in connection with the Regulations under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2000, and also advised Members of a proposed procedure for the handling of investigations from the Standards Board in respect of breaches of the Local Government Code of Conduct.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) where the complaints procedure originated. The Members were informed that the proposed procedure was adopted from Plymouth City Council which in turn was based on the Standards Board Model;
- (b) whether the full complaints procedure should be followed or whether it could be truncated with regards to small complaints. In addition, a Member enquired as to whether there could be an admission to the complaint and an apology to the complainant and that be the end of the matter. Although this was seen as a way forward it was felt that there should be something in place to refer back to the full version if required;

- (c) concerns with regards to cost and time implications. It was suggested that mechanisms be introduced by which the cost of complaints at parish council level could be charged back to the parish. As to the time implications it was said that by working in partnership with other councils, Monitoring Officers could support each other. Furthermore, the Group supported the view that a filtering system should be in place to avoid costly complaints that would have no merit being investigated. It was noted that the Standards Board was investigating the issue of costs but that its conclusions were awaited;
- (d) vexatious complaints. A Member enquired as to whether anything was in place to exclude vexatious complaints. It was suggested that power be sought to allow the Monitoring Officer to discontinue worthless investigations. The problem of vexatious complaints was, however, likely to remain a potential problem for the present;
- (e) missing appendix. A Member was concerned that appendix 3, which dealt with procedure at hearings, appeared to be missing from the report. It was therefore agreed that it would be circulated with the Minutes;

**RESOLVED**

That the report be agreed.

(Meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.00 am).

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Chairman