

HUMBERSIDE POLICE AUTHORITY

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

17 January 2006

<u>PRESENT:-</u>	Mr. A. Smith, JP in the Chair
Elected Members:-	Councillors Brady and Rudd
Independent Members:-	Mr S Hooper and Mr G Stroud, JP
Officers:-	Mr N Kingston, Assistant Chief Executive.

The Committee met at Pacific Exchange, Kingston upon Hull.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIR – The Chair commenced the meeting by extending congratulations to the Chief Executive on the birth of her second child. He also welcomed Councillor Brady to his first meeting of this Committee.

- 15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/OFFERS OF GIFTS OR HOSPITALITY** – The Chair reminded Members of the need to record any personal or prejudicial interest in items on the agenda and to disclose any relevant receipt or offering of gifts or hospitality.

No interests were declared or disclosures made.

- 16 **APOLOGIES** – No apologies for absence were submitted.

- 17 **MINUTES** – Mr Hooper pointed out that he was not a JP as was indicated in the minutes of the meeting of 5 July 2005.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 5 July 2005, having been printed and circulated amongst the Members, be taken as read and, subject to the deletion of JP following Mr Hooper's name, correctly recorded and be signed by the Chair.

- 18 **UPDATE ON THE MINUTES** – No updates were reported.

- 19 **(8) ACTION SCHEDULE** - Members received a rolling schedule of actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.

Reference was made to minute 1777 regarding reciprocal arrangements for investigations and it was reported that the Chief Executive had completed an investigation for West Yorkshire. The Assistant Chief Executive also referred

to an offer from Mr Turgoose, previously of Hull City Council, who had offered to assist in any investigations. Members also referred to an offer from ex judge Mr J Richards.

Members referred to minute 4 and the Code of Conduct training that was scheduled for March and queried whether this was now necessary. The Assistant Chief Executive referred to the changes regarding the more localised handling of complaints and it was suggested that this could be a topic for discussion. The Chair referred to a letter he had received from the Standards Board for England which advised that a guidance DVD on the handling of complaints had been sent to Monitoring Officers. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that a copy of the DVD had been received and could be used at the March training session.

Reference was made to minute 11 regarding membership of the Standards Committee and it was confirmed that the extension of the current membership had been approved until the AGM in June.

Resolved – (a) That the Action Schedule and updates be noted, and (b) that the Director of Performance and Resources/Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, determine whether there is sufficient material to hold the Code of Conduct training session on 28 March 2006.

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(9) STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND BULLETINS – ISSUES 25-26 –

The Director of Performance and Resources submitted a report that summarised the matters reported in issues 25-26 of the Standards Board Bulletins.

Members referred to the Standards Board's website policy that had recently been amended to allow for the removal of cases, where no breach of the Code of Conduct had been found, after 6 months rather than 2 years. Members acknowledged the reduction in the length of time these cases remained on the website but expressed concern that people who had been found innocent should still have to wait for 6 months before their details were removed. Members queried the rationale for allowing the cases to remain on the website for 6 months and suggested that they should be removed within a week of a person being found innocent.

Reference was made to the announcement from the Government regarding the Code of Conduct and the Assistant Chief Executive advised that the ODPM had in the last couple of weeks sent out a document that he would circulate to Members.

Resolved – (a) That the report be noted, and (b) that a letter be sent to the Standards Board for England querying the rationale for retaining details of complaints, where no breach of the Code of Conduct had been found, for 6 months and indicating that it was the view of this Standards Committee that, in such cases, the details should be removed within a week.

- 21 **(10) STANDARDS COMMITTEE NEWS 04** – Members received the Standards Committee News edition 04.

Members discussed the referral statistics and the possible benefits of regional standards boards. They also referred to the benefits of mediation and requested that details of the service offered by Mediation UK be sought.

Members also commented on (i) the issues surrounding the declaration of interests, and (ii) the need to ensure that any complaints were dealt with within 3 months, whilst ensuring that there was no undue delay but also that a full and proper investigation was conducted.

Resolved – (a) That the Standards Committee News 04 be noted, and (b) that details of the service provided by Mediation UK be sought.

- 22 **(11) FOURTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES – BIRMINGHAM, 5/6 SEPTEMBER 2005** – The Chair submitted a summary of the significant points that had been raised at the Assembly.

The Chairman expressed concern regarding whether sufficient arrangements were in place to ensure a smooth investigation and hearing should a complaint ever be received. Members referred to outline thoughts regarding the process that they had previously submitted and it was suggested that these be revisited.

Regarding the holding of a hearing Members queried whether the outcome should be judged on “the balance of probabilities” or “beyond all reasonable doubt” and whether questioning should be inquisitorial or adversarial and it was suggested that clarification should be sought from the Standards Board regarding these issues.

Resolved – (a) That the summary be noted; (b) that consideration, taking into account the comments previously made by Members, be given to a process for conducting investigations and hearings, and (c) that clarification be sought from the Standards Board for England regarding the issues relating to judgements and questioning at hearings.

- 23 **(12) POLICE FORCE STRUCTURES** – The Director of Performance and Resources submitted a report that summarised the recent developments on police force structures.

The Assistant Chief Executive advised that there had been little progress since 23 December. However, the APA were exploring a federated option and more would be known about this after 25 January.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

24 **(13) REGIONAL INDEPENDENT MEMBERS' FORUM** – Members received minutes from the meeting of the Standards Committee Independent Members' Regional Forum held on 5 December 2005.

Members discussed the issues raised including (i) the independence of Standards Committees; (ii) allowances, and (iii) the possible merits of Regional Standards Boards.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.