

**HUMBERSIDE POLICE AUTHORITY**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**27 July 2007**

**PRESENT:-**

**Elected Members:-** Councillor Vickers

**Independent Members:-** Mr S Hooper and Mr K Robinson

**Officers:-** Ms S Ismail, Chief Executive and Mr N Kingston, Assistant Chief Executive.

The Committee met at Pacific Exchange, Kingston upon Hull.

- 1 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR** – Members discussed the requirement for a Vice Chair to be elected to such a small Committee however it was decided that the position would be essential should the need for a local investigation arise.

It was moved by Mr Hooper and seconded by Councillor Vickers that Mr Robinson be appointed Vice Chair.

**Resolved** – That Mr Robinson be appointed Vice Chair of the Standards Committee for the ensuing year.

- 2 **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.

- 3 **APOLOGIES** – Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr Golden and Councillor Rudd.

- 4 **MINUTES** – **Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2007 having been printed and circulated amongst the Members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chair.

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

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

It was requested that Members receive training on local investigations and hearings as two new Members had been appointed since this training had been provided.

The Chief Executive clarified that complaints were currently submitted directly to the Standards Board for England (SBE). The new proposals were for complaints to go through a local filter system to determine the most appropriate body to deal with it. It was agreed that a structure be developed as to how investigations would be conducted and that this task be included within the Standard Committee's Programme of Work.

Members discussed the need for the Standards Committee, as the group with ethical responsibility for the Authority, to inspect and consider revisions for various protocols (Declarations of Interest, Member/Officer Relations etc) within the Authority. It was agreed that this matter be included on the Standards Committee Work Programme as a rolling item to ensure the Committee received information on how the Authority upheld protocols. It was also suggested that records of Members' Declarations of Interests be occasionally brought to the Committee.

**Resolved** – That the Action Schedule and updates be noted.

- 7 (2) **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE** – The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer submitted a report that advised Members of the new Standards Committee Terms of Reference that had been proposed at the Police Authority AGM of 19 June 2007. The report highlighted major changes concerned with the monitoring of the new Members Allowances Scheme and involvement in the new Annual Review Scheme introduced for Members of the Police Authority.

Members commented that in relation to Members' Allowances the role of the Standards Committee would be simply to make observations and offer advice.

The Assistant Chief Executive advised Members that the introduction of the Annual Review set new ground for Police Authorities as many Police Authorities did not have such mechanisms in place. The implementation of the Annual Review prepared for the likelihood that Police Authorities would be inspected in the future by the HMIC. He went on to advise that the Review had been approved by Police Authority Members at the AGM in June. The form was currently 'light touch' however this would be assessed subject to its success. The Assistant Chief Executive concluded that the Review encouraged Members to assess themselves and also encouraged communication between Police Authority Members and the Standards

Committee.

Members commented that the feedback received from the Reviews could provide invaluable information to the Secretariat with regards to training needs and suggestions for the future.

Following a Member's query on the term 'training needs' within the form, the Chief Executive advised that training included both formal and informal training, including visits by Members to the Force. The Chief Executive stated that such visits were also open to Standards Committee Members to assist them in their role of better understanding the nature of business undertaken by Members.

In response to a Member's query on the proposed outcome for a Member failing to complete a Review form, the Chief Executive advised that no sanctions were to be imposed and it was hoped that Members would approach the Review as something of benefit.

**Resolved** – That the report and the new Terms of Reference be noted.

- 8 **(3) NEW MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT** – The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer submitted a report that requested the Standards Committee consider the recommendation they should make to the Police Authority regarding the adoption of a revised Code of Conduct in light of the debate between the Association of Police Authorities (APA), the Standards Board for England (SBE) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) over the new Code of Conduct.

The Assistant Chief Executive updated Members that following the Standards Committee decision in April to submit the new Code of Conduct in its entirety to the Police Authority AGM, concerns had been raised by the APA. The Secretariat had felt it important that the Standards Committee be fully sighted on these concerns prior to a submission being made.

**Resolved** – (a) That the Model Code of Conduct be accepted in its entirety and (b) that Members of the Standards Committee be kept informed of developments regarding the APA pursuit of a separate code of Conduct for Police Authorities.

- 9 **(4) CODE OF CONDUCT – GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS** - The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer submitted a report that provided details on the Standards Board for England guidance that had been produced to accompany the new Code of Conduct.

The Assistant Chief Executive advised Members that the guidance recommended that the Ten Principles of Public Life be included as a preamble to the Code of Conduct.

The Assistant Chief Executive referred Members to paragraph 12(2) of the Code advising that although not mandatory for Police Authorities, it was a possibility that it be included within the Code. He explained that the paragraph related to the circumstance that a Member would want to speak on an item that they had had a prejudicial interest in; the decision to be made was whether this should be provided as a matter of right or whether dispensation should be sought from the Standards Committee. It was queried whether the ability to make representations on items that a Member had a prejudicial interest was appropriate within the context of Police Authorities. It was agreed that Members and other Authorities be consulted on the inclusion of the paragraph to allow an informed decision to be made.

**Resolved** – (a) That the report and accompanying guidance be noted; (b) that the inclusion of the 10 principles of public life as a preamble to the new Code of Conduct be approved and (c) that the Code of Conduct be adopted at the next full Police Authority meeting on 18 September 2007 with Members being advised on Standards Committee discussions and results of consultations with Members and other Police Authorities in relation to paragraph 12(2) with its inclusion to be determined by the Police Authority, with the consent of the Standards Committee.

- 10      **(5) TRAINING ON THE NEW CODE OF CONDUCT** – The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer submitted a report that informed Members about the training required on the new Code of Conduct and how and when this might be carried out.

Members discussed the timing of the training and suggested that training be provided prior to the introduction of the Code to provide Members with an awareness of what they are signing up to. The Chief Executive agreed to attempt to arrange a date for training as near as possible to, if not before, the Police Authority meeting of 18 September. The Chief Executive agreed that as a minimum, at the 18 September meeting, officers would highlight to Members the changes to the Code. It was agreed that Secretariat officers commence the process of compiling training materials with Standards Committee Members being factored into the delivery of the programme at a later date.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

- 11      **(6) ASSOCIATION FOR INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES IN ENGLAND (AIMSce)** – The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer submitted a report that provided Members with information on the Association for Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce) to allow the Committee to make an informed decision regarding membership.

Members commented on the bias from the Association towards local authorities and suggested that a recommendation be made to the Association for the introduction sub groups to concentrate on specialist Standards Committees, such as Police Authority/ Fire Authority etc Standards Committees. Mr Robinson advised that he would attend future meetings of AIMSce as a member of the Council's Standards Committee and would forward any relevant information to this Committee.

**Resolved** – That enquiries be made on the introduction of a police authority sub group with outcomes being brought to this Committee prior to a decision on membership being made.