

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Standards Committee held on Friday 2 December 2005 in Conference Room 3, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Mr J Woolley (Chair)

Mr J K Fryer
Ms J Lashmar
Mr J Nicholson

Mr M C Tonkin

Also Present:

Monitoring Officer
Deputy Monitoring Officer

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs C A Egan.

18. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items on the agenda for which the press and public were to be excluded.

19. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of any personal interests relating to any item on the agenda.

20. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 July 2005 had been circulated with the agenda. The Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 28 November 2005 were tabled.

A Member advised that the issue of declaring gifts and hospitality, as highlighted under Minute No.8 of the meeting on 14 July had been raised at the meeting of the Police Authority on 26 September 2005.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 14 July and 28 November 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

21. CUMBRIA LOCAL AUTHORITIES STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The last meeting of the Cumbria Local Authorities Standards Committee, hosted by Allerdale Borough Council on 2 August 2005, had been very poorly attended. One of the Authority's representatives at the meeting had written to Allerdale Borough Council to express his disappointment at the arrangements for the meeting.

Members expressed some concern that as a result of the poor attendance there had been a loss of momentum in developing standardised procedures for all the public authorities within the County.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

22. STANDARDS BOARDS BULLETINS NUMBERS 25 AND 26

It was noted that Bulletin 25 referred to the issue of a DVD by the end of September designed to promote Best Practice in local investigations and hearings. The DVD had not yet been received by the Authority. When received Members were keen that it be viewed by the Committee.

Members also noted the use of mediation which could provide a very practical solution to complaints.

RESOLVED, that the Standards Board Bulletins be noted.

23. STANDARDS BOARD STANDARDS COMMITTEE NEWS ISSUE NO 4

A copy of Standards Committee News number 4 had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

Members noted the debate surrounding the establishment of a National Forum for Independent Members and the continued drive to establish regional fora for Independent Members.

The view was expressed by the Authority's Independent Members that this was not needed in Cumbria at the present time

RESOLVED, that Standards Committee News Issue No 4 be noted.

24. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES 2005

Members considered a series of papers relating to the Fourth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees held on 5 and 6 September 2005 in Birmingham. Included in the papers was a report submitted by Mr Tonkin, one of the Authority's Independent Members.

The Committee Chair, who had also attended the Assembly, considered that the event had been worthwhile, and had been particularly valuable with regard to the information he had gained on partnerships and declarations of interest.

(Note; Mr Tonkin joined the meeting at this point)

Mr Tonkin summarised his views on the Assembly for the benefit of the Committee. He considered that the Assembly had been very council orientated with no elements tailored specifically for police authorities. One consequence of this was that many of the case studies were very technical and not necessarily applicable in a police authority setting.

He referred to the move to refer to Independent Members of Standards Committee's as "external" Members to reduce confusion with Independent Councillors on local authorities and Independent Members of police authorities.

He also referred to suggestions that Standards Committees should be composed of a majority of External/Independent Members and that one of those Members should be the Chair. He expressed the view that this was not necessary, and that there were advantages in having a Councillor as Chair of a Standards Committee.

RESOLVED, that the reports on the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees be noted.

25. LOCAL INVESTIGATION AND DETERMINATION OF STANDARDS ISSUES

The Monitoring Officer referred to the Authority's desire to see procedures developed within Cumbria which were compatible. There were benefits in all Cumbrian Authorities having similar schemes as this would facilitate mutual assistance.

He reminded Members of their consideration of procedures earlier in the year which had been deemed too complicated. It was hoped that the January meeting of the Cumbria Local Authorities Standards Committee would see some progress on this matter.

RESOLVED, that the position be noted.

There were no Part II items.

The meeting ended at 11.05am.