

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2011

**C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Mr Patrick (Barry) O'Connor (Chair)
Mr Matthew William Rowe (Vice-Chair)
Mr Eric Pemberton (Independent Member)
Ms. S. Bagum (Independent Member)
Mr Denzil Johnson (Independent Member)
Ms Sue Rossiter (Independent Member)
Councillor Zara Davis

Councillor Joshua Peck

Officers Present:

Jill Bell – (Head of Legal Services (Environment), Legal Services)
Antonella Burgio – (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rachel Saunders; Councillor Joshua Peck attended as substitute.

John Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services apologised that he was unable to present the report at agenda item 4.1.

David Galpin, Head of Legal Services – Community apologised that he was unable to present the report at agenda item 4.2.

Jill Bell, Head of Legal Services, Environment attended the meeting to present the above reports on behalf of Mr Williams and Mr Galpin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of personal or prejudicial interests were made.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

Subject to correction of a typographical error at the second paragraph at page five of the minutes, that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards

Committee held on 19 July 2011 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Appointment of Two Independent Members to the Standards Committee

The Chair introduced the report which informed the Committee that, at the Council meeting on 21 September 2011, two Independent Members had been appointed to the Standards Committee for a three year term.

The Chair welcomed Mr Eric Pemberton who had been re-appointed and Mr Denzil Johnson who was newly appointed.

RESOLVED

That the appointments be noted.

4.2 Covert Investigation Under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

Jill Bell, Head of Legal Services – Environment presented the report circulated at agenda item 4.2 which formed part of the Council's arrangements for oversight of the Council's usage of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). Mr Johnson joined the meeting at 7.45 p.m.

The Committee was advised that, as a result of Standards Committee's feedback on use of RIPA powers, procedures had been reviewed and changes implemented. In implementing these changes staff were now better aware of how other enforcement powers could be used effectively and therefore there had been increased enforcement without need to resort to RIPA use.

In response to Members' questions, the Head of Legal Services – Environment provided the following information:

RIPA activity had decreased and was being reserved for serious matters as directed within the legislation.

The Authority did not consider use of RIPA powers appropriate for dog fouling offences.

The Committee raised the following matters:

The Chair noted that the Committee had previously criticised the frequent use of RIPA, however to ensure that bureaucracy had not been the main cause of decreased RIPA activity future, reports should contain reasons why RIPA requests had been declined.

Action Andrew Bamber, Service Head, Community Service

The Chair asked that Andrew Bamber, Service Head, Community Service be invited to attend the next meeting to explain the how the decisions around RIPA applications had been made.

Action Democratic Services

The Committee noted the Authority's approach, however some Members of the Committee felt that, where there was evidence of repeated and persistent dog fouling offences, use of RIPA should not be prohibited. The Chair requested that Andrew Bamber, Service Head, Community Service be invited to answer questions around this issue.

Action Democratic Services

Councillor Peck requested that breakdown data for prosecutions be included in the quarterly report.

Action David Galpin, Head of Legal Services – Community

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 7.55 p.m.

Chair, Mr Patrick (Barry) O'Connor
Standards Committee

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