

Committee on Standards of Conduct STD 09-00 (draft min)

Date: 6th December 2000, at 2pm

Venue: Committee Room 1, Cardiff Bay

Attendance:

Members

David Melding, South Wales Central (Chair)

Cynog Dafis, Mid and West Wales

Janice Gregory, Ogmore

Christine Gwyther, Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire

Brian Hancock, Islwyn

Karen Sinclair, Clwyd South

Gwenda Thomas, Neath

Officials

Julie Grant, Committee Clerk (outgoing)

Andrew George, Committee Clerk (incoming)

Jill Thomas, Deputy Clerk

David Lambert, Legal Adviser

Other

Richard Penn, the Assembly's Independent Adviser on Standards

Item 1: Minutes of the last meeting and Chair's introductory remarks

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including Christine Gwyther and Karen Sinclair who had replaced Richard Edwards and Val Feld. Thanks were given to Mr Edwards

and Ms Feld for their valued contribution to the Committee. Apologies had been received from Christine Humphreys and Gareth Jones, both of whom were absent due to illness. The Chair wished them a speedy recovery.

2. The Chair also welcomed Andrew George, who had been appointed as Clerk to the Committee. He thanked Julie Grant, the outgoing Clerk for her much appreciated advice and assistance to the Committee during its formative year.

3. The Committee confirmed that the minutes of the last meeting (STD 08-00 min) were an accurate record subject to one minor typographical amendment.

Item 2: Quarterly update and review of action arising from STD-08-00

Paper STD-09-00(1)

4. The Committee noted the Secretariat's paper.

5. Matters Arising: The Committee acknowledged that the oversight of Members' conduct in the Chamber is a matter for the Presiding Officer.

Item 3: Update on the Register of Members interests

Paper STD-09-00(2)

5. The Committee noted the Secretariat's paper.

6. Matters Arising: The Secretariat confirmed that details of persons who view the Register are not recorded.

Item 4: The Committee's forward work programme

Paper STD 09-00(3)

7. The Committee discussed the Secretariat's paper. It was agreed that it would be desirable for the Committee to have a forward work programme. Members asked the Secretariat to prepare a provisional timetable for the programme for their consideration, although it was recognised that the Committee would need to consider urgent issues such as complaints hearings as they arose. The following points were also noted:

Issue 1 - Indirect Interests - the Committee recognised that in the light of legal advice about the Assembly's present arrangements this matter will be reviewed as a priority.

Issue 2 - Role of Independent of Adviser - this will be considered in light of our experience

and that of other administrations who have opted to mirror the Westminster model of an appointing an Independent Commissioner for Standards.

Issue 3 - Working with Other Committees - the Committee will have regard to the work of parallel committees in other administrations and local government in Wales.

Issue 4 - Freemasonry - the Committee may be asked to consider whether Human Rights legislation has implications for the requirements for Members to register and declare their interests.

Action: Secretariat to prepare revised forward work programme with timings for the Committee's consideration.

Item 5: Any Other Business and date of next meeting

Advertising

8. The Committee discussed the use of advertising facilities around Assembly buildings and agreed that it would be appropriate for any concerns about the display of advertisements to be raised with the Advertising Standards Agency.

Date of Next Meeting

9. The Committee will next meet on 31 January 2001.

Item 6: C003-00

10. Hearing held in closed session.

Standards Committee Secretariat

Office of the Presiding Officer