

ITEM NO. 7

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

15TH JANUARY 2004

REVIEW OF THE START TIME FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE

ITEM FOR DECISION

The start time for Standards Committee is discussed.

(1) Concern has been raised in respect of the start time of 6 p.m. for the meeting on the 15th January 2004. Councillors who work in London may be disadvantaged by not being able to get to Argyle Road in time.

(2) In addition, there is also concern that the determination hearing set for the 20th February 2004 is scheduled for 10 a.m. as Councillors who work cannot keep using annual leave for day time meetings and a request has been made that such hearings be held in the evening.

(3) The Standards Board for England has recommended that determination hearings under the Local Authorities (Code of Conduct)(Local Determination) Regulations 2003 take part during the day and that the Standards Committee of a local authority endeavours to avoid a determination being part heard.

(4) A case relating to a town or parish councillor can be delegated to a sub-committee which has been set up to deal with town and parish council matters. All Members of the Standards Committee may take part in a hearing if they choose. However, the Standards Board for England recommends that a small number of members (three or five) take part in the determination, as it is fairer and more efficient to hold a hearing before a small group.

(5) The Monitoring Officer at Sevenoaks District Council was advised by the Standards Board for England that a second determination was going to be fast tracked and received by this authority prior to Christmas thus giving this Committee the opportunity of hearing both cases on the same day. In the light of this information a 10 a.m. start time was considered appropriate. However, it is now unlikely that both cases can be heard on the same day as the Monitoring Officer is still awaiting receipt of the second determination as at the date of writing this report, 2nd January 2004.

ITEM NO. 7

Source of Information

Information received from the Standards Board
for England

The Standards Board for England – Standards
Committee determinations

Contact Officer:

Christine Nuttall Ext. 7245

ROBIN HALES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE