

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON
WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2008**

PRESENT: C Lord (Chair)

Councillors T Leadley, G Phelps and A Wallace

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Brice and R Downes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no personal or prejudicial interests declared by Members at the meeting.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2007 be approved.

4. REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Committee considered a report of the Clerk and Chief Financial Officer on the Members' Allowances Scheme proposed for 2008/09.

Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances

Members were informed that under the 2003 Local Authority Members Allowances Regulations, a revised scheme was required to be approved, each year, before the start of the financial year.

Members reviewed the scheme and in view of the fact that there had been no significant changes to the responsibilities of Members, proposed that no revisions be made other than to update the cost of the basic and special responsibility allowances by 2.5% to reflect the percentage increased granted to the Executive's staff on 1 April 2007.

Travelling and Subsistence Expenses

It was reported that new rates for Travelling and Subsistence expenses were

expected to be announced shortly and that Schedule 3 of the scheme would be automatically amended to reflect the new rates when received. Members would be notified of any changes in rates which would apply from 1 April 2008.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the proposed Members' Allowances Scheme be recommended from 1 April 2008.
- (b) That the scheme be amended from 1 April 2008 for any revised travelling and expenses rates subsequently issued by the Executive for their staff.

5. REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

The Committee considered a report of the Clerk updating Members on the Register of Personal and Prejudicial Interests and information relating to gifts and hospitality declared by Members during 2007/08.

Register of Interests

The Committee were informed that, in accordance with the Authority's model Code of Conduct, it had a statutory obligation to keep a register of members' financial and other interests. The register is reviewed every six months by the Clerk.

Gifts and Hospitality

It was reported that, in accordance with the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members, it was necessary for any gifts and hospitality with a value over £25 to be declared in writing to the Authority's Monitoring Officer within 28 days. Declarations were kept on a register which was available for inspection upon Request. The Committee were provided with details of gifts and hospitality declared by Members during 2007/08 which was attached as Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

6. STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND : BULLETINS 36 AND 37

The Committee considered a report of the Clerk informing Members of the latest Standards Board Bulletins published in December 2007 and February 2008.

Members were informed that the Bulletins, which were published every few months, were a summary of news and guidance for Officers and Members which provided the latest news, features and guidance on the Code of Conduct and the work of the Standards Board for England.

A summary of the main items included in the Bulletins were circulated for Members' information.

Members were advised that in the future, Standards Committees would become responsible for assessing Code of Conduct complaints. The Standards Board had indicated that they were currently drafting guidance on various aspects of the Standards framework, including the local assessment function and it was their intention to make that guidance available as soon as possible before the legislation became effective.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That officers be asked to investigate if any other PTAs had received a complaint against one of their members for breaching the Code of Conduct.