

## **PART 5**

### **CODES AND PROTOCOLS**

## MEMBERS' CHARTER

1. Epping Forest District Council hereby undertakes for all members of the Council -
  - (a) to provide information on a timely basis about the Council which is available under the law and to which members are entitled;
  - (b) to have the right to attend meetings of the Cabinet, committees, sub-committees and panels of the Council, except regulatory committees, notwithstanding he/she is not a member thereof and, with the permission of the Chairman, take part in the discussion, but not vote or introduce new business;
  - (c) to ensure open access to relevant officers subject to normal protocols and courtesies, e.g. prior notification to relevant Head of Service or Assistant Head of Service before approaching junior officers;
  - (d) to recognise the rights of all councillors to be consulted in advance about matters affecting them as members, with particular regard to their ward constituency role and to be notified in advance about any proposed action;
  - (e) to meet the reasonable training needs of all members necessary for their duties and responsibilities for the authority;
  - (f) to recognise and provide support for the role of members in:
    - carrying out Best Value Service Reviews
    - representing their constituents
    - scrutinising Executive decisions
    - participating in review of policy and procedure
    - exercising their right to challenge and call in Executive decisions
  - (g) to respond promptly to correspondence from Councillors and to provide dedicated secretarial, administrative and research support;
  - (h) to provide suitable facilities for all members consistent with their communication and information needs;
  - (i) to provide a continual development training programme relating to duties as a Councillor; and
  - (j) to recognise the duty of the Chairman of the Council to act as spokesperson or champion for the needs of all Councillors in upholding this Charter.
2. Each member of the Council undertakes:
  - (a) to respect the duties and responsibilities of the Executive and its legal right to make decisions on its functions;

- (b) to respect confidentiality of Council information and proceedings where appropriate particularly where exempt or confidential business is involved;
- (c) to recognise that there is an expectation for training attaching to duties of a Councillor;
- (d) to acknowledge that failure to participate in required training will risk members being unable to participate fully in relevant decision making, particularly in relation to regulatory and planning committees;
- (e) not to use the "call-in" procedure unnecessarily;
- (f) to treat officers and other members with respect at all times;
- (g) to respect the role of officers in running their services;
- (h) to avoid unreasonable or personalised criticism of officers or other members at public meetings or similar occasions, or to the press or to constituents;
- (i) to adhere to the requirements of Standing Orders regarding visits to Council premises and dealings with individual staff; and
- (j) to uphold the Local Government Code of Conduct at all times.

3. Breach of this Charter may result in reference to the Standards Committee.