



Epping Forest District Council

STANDARDS COMMITTEE **Tuesday, 27th February, 2007**

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
Room: Committee Room 1
Time: 7.30 pm
Committee Secretary: G Lunnun, Research and Democratic Services
Tel: 01992 564244 Email: glunnun@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

Dr D Hawes (Chairman), Ms M Marshall, G Weltch, Councillors Mrs D Borton and Mrs P Smith

Parish/Town Council Deputy Representative(s):

Councillors J Salter, B Surtees (Deputy)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2006 (attached).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT - APPLICATION (Pages 9 - 12)

(Monitoring Officer) To note the attached advice from the Standards Board following the High Court decision in the Livingstone case.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT - CONSULTATION ON REVISED MODEL (Pages 13 - 24)

Recommendation;

To consider the draft revised Code of Conduct and to authorise the Monitoring Officer to respond to the consultation as considered appropriate.

(Monitoring Officer) Members of the Committee were sent on 6 February 2007, a copy of a letter from the Department for Communities and Local Government together with a copy of the consultation paper which seeks views on a draft of a proposed new model Code of Conduct for local authority members.

Attached is a briefing note prepared by the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors on the draft revised Code which seeks to identify the relaxations from the current Code and the additional obligations. The briefing note includes comments in bold italics which may help members in their discussion on this matter. Also attached is a briefing from the Local Government Information Unit which highlights and comments on issues.

The list of the specific questions on which the Government would welcome views is also attached.

6. PLANNING PROTOCOL - REVISION (Pages 25 - 28)

1 (Monitoring Officer) At the last meeting, it was agreed that changes should be made to the Planning Protocol regarding planning applications made by officers and members and the role of Area Plans Sub Committee Chairmen if a planning matter is referred on to the District Development Control Committee.

2. Councillor Wright, members of the Committee and the Head of Planning Services have all commented on the proposed revisions. A revised draft is now submitted so that it may be recommended to the Council and Parish/Town Councils for adoption.

3. One significant development since the last meeting relates to the form for notifying member/officer status and of any relationship to any member of the Council. The Committee was keen to ensure that a form should be sent to any applicant so as to prompt them to disclose this matters but the Government has now prescribed its own form which deals with the point. The revised draft reflects this.

7. ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF DISTRICT AND PARISH/TOWN COUNCILLORS - CURRENT POSITION (Pages 29 - 30)

(Monitoring Officer) To note the attached schedule.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

(Monitoring Officer) The calendar for 2006/07 provides for a meeting of the Committee on 25 April 2007.

Additional meetings can be arranged as and when required by the Committee.

The Council's draft calendar of meetings for 2007/08 provides for meetings of the Committee on 17 July 2007, 16 October 2007, 26 February 2008 and 22 April 2008.

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated:

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
Nil	Nil	

To resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items which are confidential under Section 100(A)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972:

Agenda Item No	Subject
Nil	Nil

Paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require:

- (1) All business of the Council requiring to be transacted in the presence of the press and public to be completed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest.
- (2) At the time appointed under (1) above, the Chairman shall permit the completion of debate on any item still under consideration, and at his or her discretion, any other remaining business whereupon the Council shall proceed to exclude the public and press.
- (3) Any public business remaining to be dealt with shall be deferred until after the completion of the private part of the meeting, including items submitted for report rather than decision.

Background Papers: Paragraph 8 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

Inspection of background papers may be arranged by contacting the officer responsible for the item.