



Epping Forest District Council

STANDARDS COMMITTEE **Wednesday, 25th April, 2007**

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Room: Members Room

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 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2007 (attached).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

4. REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS (Pages 11 - 26)

Recommendation:

To consider the revised Code of Conduct with a view to recommending its adoption to the Council.

(Monitoring Officer) Copies of the revised Code of Conduct and an explanatory memorandum are attached.

Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000 states that it is the duty of a relevant authority within the period of six months from the making of a new model code to pass a resolution adopting a new code in place of their existing code.

The new model code was made on 2 April 2007 and the Council should adopt its new code by not later than 1 October 2007.

The Council can adopt the model code as it stands or may include additional provisions which are consistent with the model code.

In order to meet the timescale, the full Council must adopt a new code at one of its meetings scheduled for 28 June 2007 and 24 July 2007. To report to one of those meetings this Committee will need to consider the new code and make recommendations at this meeting or decide to hold a special meeting in June or July.

After adopting a new code the Council must:

- (a) ensure that copies are available for inspection by the public at all reasonable hours;
- (b) publish a notice in one or more local newspapers stating that a new code has been adopted and advising where copies can be inspected;
- (c) send a copy to the Standards Board for England.

5. ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF DISTRICT AND PARISH/TOWN COUNCILLORS - CURRENT POSITION (Pages 27 - 28)

(Monitoring Officer) To consider the attached schedule.

6. INDEPENDENT MEMBER - VACANCY

Recommendation:

To note the decision of the Council in relation to the appointment of a new independent member of this Committee.

(Monitoring Officer) The Council appointed a selection panel of district councillors to secure the recruitment of an independent member as a successor to Dr D Hawes on the Standards Committee.

Publicity regarding the vacancy resulted in the issue of ten recruitment packs to interested parties. Out of those ten requests four applications were received. All four applicants met the selection criteria and they were invited for interview by the Panel. One applicant withdrew and the remaining three applicants attended for interview.

The selection panel included Councillors Mrs D Borton and Mrs P Smith. Dr Hawes attended the interviews and had an input into the assessment process but did not vote on an appointment. The Panel was also assisted by the Monitoring Officer and the Deputy Monitoring Officer although, like Dr Hawes, they took no part in the final decision and voting on an appointment.

A report of the Panel recommending the appointment of Mr M Wright with effect from the date of resignation of Dr D Hawes, namely 17 May 2007 will be considered at the Council meeting on 24 April 2007. The decision of the Council will be reported orally.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

(Monitoring Officer) The calendar for 2007/08 provides for meetings of the Committee on 17 July 2007, 16 October 2007, 26 February 2008 and 8 April 2008.

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

8. 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	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.