



Epping Forest District Council

STANDARDS COMMITTEE **Tuesday, 17th July, 2007**

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
Room: Committee Room 1
Time: 7.30 pm
Committee Secretary: Graham Lunnun - Research and Democratic Services
Email: glunnun@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel 01992 564243

Members:

Ms M Marshall, G Weltch, M Wright, Councillor Mrs P Smith and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Parish/Town Council Deputy Representative(s):

Mrs D Borton, B Surtees (Deputy)

1. CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation:

To elect a Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2007/08.

(Monitoring Officer) The Committee is asked to elect a Chairman for the current year.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2007 (attached).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

5. PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Recommendation:

To note that Parish Councillor Mrs D Borton has been appointed as the Parish/Town Council representative on the Committee in succession to

Parish Councillor J Salter.

1. (Monitoring Officer) The Epping Forest District Association of the Essex Association of Local Councils has advised that they have appointed Parish Councillor Mrs Daphne Borton as the Parish/Town Council representative on the Committee in succession to Parish Councillor Jason Salter.

2. Councillor Salter had been a member of the Committee since it was established in 2001. He decided to stand down as the Parish/Town Council representative on the Committee due to other commitments.

6. NEW CODE OF CONDUCT (Pages 11 - 22)

Recommendations:

(1) To note that Epping Forest District Council adopted the new Code of Conduct (without alteration) on 28 June 2007 as recommended by this Committee; and

(2) To receive an oral progress report on adoption by the 24 Parish and Town Councils in the District;

(3) To request a progress report at the next meeting on completion of registrations of interests by district and Parish councillors.

1. (Monitoring Officer) To report that a revised Code of Conduct was adopted by the District Council as indicated above. A copy is attached.

2. Parish and Town Councils are engaged in the same process and a report will be made at the meeting on their decisions in this regard.

3. A further report will be made at the next meeting on completion of registration of interests at the next meeting.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT - APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION (Pages 23 - 24)

(Monitoring Officer) To consider the attached report.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH BILL (Pages 25 - 28)

(Monitoring Officer) To consider the attached report

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

(Monitoring Officer) To consider the attached schedule.

10. GUIDANCE ON GIFTS & HOSPITALITY (Pages 31 - 36)

Recommendations:

(1) To consider suggested changes to the guidance on gifts and hospitality; and

(2) To consider whether the district and Town/Parish councils should be consulted about the suggested changes before these are formally adopted.

1. (Monitoring Officer) Attached is a copy of the Guidance previously issued by the Committee regarding gifts and hospitality. Track changes are shown on the document to reflect amendments felt necessary to align with changes made in the new code of conduct.

11. PLANNING PROTOCOL (Pages 37 - 56)

Recommendations:

(1) To consider suggested changes to the Planning Protocol to:

(a) accord with the new Code of Conduct;

(b) to give new advice on planning applications from Councillors and political parties; and

(2) To consider whether to consult the Head of Planning and Economic Development, Planning Agents, District Council and Parish/Town Councils on the changes before seeking formal adoption by the Council.

1. (Monitoring Officer) Attached is a copy of the Council's Planning Protocol in a document which shows track changes showing suggested amendments to accord with the new Code of Conduct. Section 23 is a new section designed to give further advice on declarations of prejudicial interests in relation to planning matters originating from colleague Councillors or political parties. Before recommending adoption by the Council, the committee may wish to consider prior consultation with those bodies and individuals which have been consulted before.

12. PROTOCOL ON USE OF FACILITIES FOR COUNCILLORS (Pages 57 - 62)

Recommendations:

(1) To consider suggested amendments to the previous protocol; and

(2) To consider whether there should be prior consultation with the District Council and Parish/Town Councils regarding the suggested changes.

1. (Monitoring Officer) The attached document shows, by means of track changes, suggested changes to the previous guidance on use of Council facilities by

members.

2. The Committee should consider prior consultation prior to adoption.

**13. ADVICE NOTE ON COUNCILLORS INVOLVED IN OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS
(Pages 63 - 68)**

Recommendations:

(1) To consider suggested changes to the guidance on outside organisations; and

(2) To consider whether the District Council and Town/Parish Councils should be consulted about the suggested changes before adoption.

1. (Monitoring Officer) Attached is a copy of the previous guidance issued by the Committee regarding conflicts of interest involving Councillors who serve on outside bodies. The document shows track changes which indicate amendments thought necessary to accord with the new Code of Conduct.

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

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

15. 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.