



Epping Forest District Council

STANDARDS COMMITTEE **Tuesday, 16th October, 2007**

Place: Committee Room 1, 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:

Ms M Marshall (Chairman), G Weltch, M Wright, Councillors Mrs P Smith and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Parish/Town Council Deputy Representative(s):

Councillors Mrs D Borton, B Surtees (Deputy)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2007 (attached).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

4. PLANNING PROTOCOL

(Monitoring Officer) To consider suggested changes to the Planning Protocol, having regard to the results of a consultation exercise (report to follow).

5. NEW CODE OF CONDUCT

Recommendation:

To receive a progress report on the adoption of the new Code by parish/town councils and completion of registrations of interests by district and parish/town councillors.

(Monitoring Officer) At the last meeting, the Committee noted that the District Council had adopted the new Code of Conduct, without alteration, on 28 June 2007.

The Committee requested that a progress report be submitted to this meeting on adoption of the new Code by parish /town councils and on completion of new registrations of interests by district and parish/town councillors.

Notification of adoption of a new Code has now been received from all 24 parish/town councils.

Within 28 days of adoption of a new Code all members are required to re-register their interests. All 58 district councillors have completed and returned new registration of interest forms. Forms have also been received from 18 parish/town councils. Clarification of the position of the remaining parish/town councils is being pursued.

6. CODE OF CONDUCT - APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

Recommendation:

To note that following the last meeting of the Committee, no further applications for dispensation were received and a decision on the acceptance of tenders for the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation to house homeless persons has now been taken.

(Monitoring Officer) At the last meeting of the Committee, consideration was given to five applications from members of the District Council's Cabinet for dispensation to take part in a decision regarding the acceptance of tenders for the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation to house homeless persons.

The Committee agreed to hold a special meeting, if necessary, in order to consider possible applications from the remaining three members of the Cabinet. No further applications were received and it became clear the Cabinet quorum had been lost. In order to resolve the issue the Cabinet delegated the decision to a Portfolio Holder who did not have a prejudicial interest to declare. As a result there is no need for this Committee to take any further action.

7. ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF DISTRICT AND PARISH/TOWN COUNCILLORS - CURRENT POSITION (Pages 13 - 14)

(Monitoring Officer) To note the attached schedule.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

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

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.