



# Epping Forest District Council

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** **Wednesday, 2nd July, 2008**

**Place:** Civic Offices, High Street, Epping  
**Room:** Committee Room 1  
**Time:** 7.30 pm  
**Committee Secretary:** G Lunnun - The Office of the Chief Executive  
Tel: 01992 564244 Email: glunnun@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

### **Members:**

Ms M Marshall (Chairman), G Weltch , M Wright , Councillors B Rolfe and Mrs P Smith

### **Parish/Town Council Deputy Representative(s):**

Councillors Mrs D Borton, B Surtees (Deputy)

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## **1. CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE**

### **Recommendation:**

**To elect a Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2008/09**

(Monitoring Officer) The Committee is asked to elect a Chairman for the coming year. The Chairman must be elected from the independent co-optees and cannot be a member of the District Council or of any Parish or Town Council.

## **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

### **Recommendation:**

**To appoint, subject to Council approval, a Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2008/09**

(Monitoring Officer) The Committee is asked to appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the coming year. The appointment must be from the independent co-optees on the Committee. A vice-chairman has not been appointed in the past but it is considered prudent to make an appointment to cover for the chairman when necessary. As this requires a change to the Council's Constitution an appointment will be subject to Council approval and will need to be reflected in the revised Article 9 of the Constitution to be considered later in the meeting.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**4. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 6)**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2008 (attached).

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

**6. LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT BY COUNCILLORS (Pages 7 - 26)**

(Monitoring Officer) To consider the attached report.

**7. CONSTITUTION - ARTICLE 9 - THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE - REVISIONS (Pages 27 - 30)**

To consider the attached revised article 9 of the Council's Constitution and recommend its adoption to the Council.

**8. ADMINISTRATION OF THE LOCAL ASSESSMENT SCHEME (Pages 31 - 36)**

**Recommendation:**

**(1) To note the steps being taken by the Local Assessment Officer to introduce the new procedures for dealing with complaints against Councillors; and**

**(2) To consider any further steps that the Committee wish to take in publicising the scheme.**

1. (Local Assessment Officer) The Standards Board has issued Guidance on the Administration of the Local Assessment Scheme to reflect the Regulations recently issued. The administration of the scheme has meant that arrangements have already been made to publicise the new complaints system:

- (a) on the Council's website;
- (b) by placing a public notice in the local newspaper;
- (c) putting an article into the Council's own magazine, the Forrester; and
- (d) Issueing a press release.

2. The Standards Committee and the Local Democracy webpages now include a link to a new page on Councillor Conduct which gives information about our scheme, a suggested complaint form (attached); links to the Code of Conduct and the (currently draft) Assessment Criteria (attached to an earlier report).

3. The Standards Board has also set up a reporting system for local complaints.

Local Authority Standards Committees are required to submit a return at the end of each quarter on the number and types of complaints. The system also enables the tracking of complaints and the results of the Assessments, Reviews, and Hearings to be monitored. The expectation of the Standards Board is that Assessments will be carried out within a period of 20 working days of receipt and that any Hearings will be completed within a three month period.

## 9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

(Monitoring Officer) The calendar for 2008/09 provides for meetings of the Committee on 15 July 2008, 13 October 2008, 27 January 2009 and 14 April 2009.

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

## 10. 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:

<b>Agenda Item No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</b>
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:

<b>Agenda Item No</b>	<b>Subject</b>
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.