



Epping Forest District Council

STANDARDS COMMITTEE **Tuesday, 26th January, 2010**

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Room: Committee Room 2

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer G Lunnun - The Office of the Chief Executive
Email: glunnun@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel: 01992 564244

Members:

Independent Members: Ms M Marshall (Chairman), G Weltch and M Wright
District Councillors: Mrs P Smith, B Rolfe, Mrs J H Whitehouse
Parish/Town Council Representatives: Councillors Mrs D Borton, J Salter and B Surtees

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2009 (attached).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

4. LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS

(Monitoring Officer) To view a Standards for England DVD (running time 44 minutes) designed to help standards committee members and local authority officers involved in the assessment of complaints. It goes through the stages of pre-assessment, assessment, decision and review. Dramatised case studies are used to demonstrate the criteria that guide each decision, including whether any investigation should be conducted locally or referred to Standards for England.

**5. INFORMAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE - 13 OCTOBER 2009
(Pages 11 - 16)**

Recommendation:

- (1) To receive the notes of the meeting held on 13 October 2009 (attached);
and**
- (2) To approve the revised Local Assessment of Complaints – Criteria**

(Monitoring Officer) The notes of the informal meeting held on 13 October 2009 are attached together with revised criteria for the Local Assessment of Complaints.

6. PREDISPOSITION, PREDETERMINATION OR BIAS, AND THE CODE (Pages 17 - 30)

Recommendation:

To note Standards for England guidance on Predisposition, Predetermination or Bias and the Code of Conduct

(Monitoring Officer) The attached updated guidance issued by Standards for England follows a session held at the Annual Assembly in October 2009 which looked at the relationship between bias, predetermination and the Code.

7. LOCAL ASSESSMENT - EXPERIENCES OF THE PROCESS (Pages 31 - 34)

Recommendation:

To note a Standards for England summary of discussions (attached) which took place at the Annual Assembly in October 2009 about experiences of the local assessment process since its introduction in May 2008.

8. ALLEGATIONS MADE ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF DISTRICT AND PARISH/TOWN COUNCILLORS (Pages 35 - 36)

(Monitoring Officer) To consider the attached schedule showing the current position.

9. PLANNING PROTOCOL - REVIEW

(Monitoring Officer) Officers are continuing to work on a revised Protocol but this cannot be finalised and submitted to the Committee until publication by the Government of a new Members Code of Conduct.

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

(Monitoring Officer) The calendar for 2009/10 provides for a meeting of the Committee on 13 April 2010.

The draft calendar for 2010/11 provides for meetings of the Committee on 13 July 2010, 12 October 2010, 18 January 2011 and 19 April 2011.

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

11. 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.