

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ETHICS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER

8TH DECEMBER 2008 (6 PM)

Present:

Councillors: Mrs R L Akathiotis, P Dyke, G H Eeles, D R Godwin, M J Hart,
Mrs S M Hayward, K J Stokes.

Independent Members:

Rev J Cox (Chairman)
Mrs C A Noons (Vice-Chairman)

Town and Parish Members:

Councillor Miss A Mace (Town Council Member)
Councillor R Hobson (Parish Member)
Councillor J Swift (Parish Member)

Observers:

There were no members present as observers.

ES.8 Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Mrs H E Dyke,
M B Kelly and C D Nicholls.

ES.9 Appointment Of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

ES.10 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

ES.11 Minutes

DECISION: The minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ES.12 Welcome to Mr J Swift – New Parish Member

The Chairman welcomed Mr J Swift, the new Parish Representative to his first meeting of the Ethics and Standards Committee.

ES.13 Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Ethics and Standards Committee

A report was considered from the Monitoring Officer regarding the approval by Council of the appointment of Rev J Cox as Chairman and Mrs C A Noons as Vice-Chairman of the Ethics and Standards Committee. Members noted that the appointments were as a result of the previous Chairman tendering his resignation.

DECISION: The report be noted.

ES.14 Communities in Control : Real People, Real Power Codes of Conduct

A report was considered from the Monitoring Officer that invited views on proposals for revising the Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members and employees.

The Monitoring Officer told Members that a consultation on the Code of conduct had been promised for a long time. The reason for proposing amendments was to address ambiguities that had arisen during the first year of operation of the code. One of the main problems was the distinction between members acting in their official and non official capacity. It was proposed that this should be addressed by segregating these matters. There had also been challenges to the Code and these were highlighted in the Monitoring Officer's report.

The second part of the consultation paper related to the proposal to have a code of conduct for employees. This idea had been mooted by the Government for approximately 14 years. However the Monitoring Officer pointed out that Wyre Forest District Council already had a Code of Conduct for employees and this had been in existence for approximately 10 years. The Monitoring Officer told Members that many of the things reflected in the proposed code for employees were already contained within the Council's own code.

A general discussion ensued on the consultation and the following points were raised:

- Members could not see why employees would be required to register their interests as they do not make decisions
- Maintaining a register of interests of all employees would be very unwieldy.
- For Employees who joined the authority before the code was mandatory it would essentially be a change to their terms of employment.

DECISION:

Delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to respond on behalf of the Authority the view of the Ethics and Standards Committee.

ES.15 The Case Tribunals (England) Regulations 2008 No. 2938

A report was considered from the Monitoring Officer that informed Members about The Case Tribunals (England) Regulations 2008 which were due to come into force on 12th December 2008.

The Monitoring Officer stated that this legislation had been introduced as a result of previous consultations and outlined the statutory rules that applied for the Adjudication Panel when breaches of code of conduct were considered by them.

DECISION:

It be noted that The Case Tribunals (England) Regulations 2008 will apply with effect from 12th December 2008.

ES.16 Member Activity Reports

A report was considered from the Monitoring Officer regarding outstanding Member Activity Reports.

Since the last meeting it was noted that 3 out of the 4 outstanding reports had been received and it was agreed that these should be included on the Council's website.

DECISION:

- 1. The three reports that have been received be agreed for submission onto the Council's website.**
- 2. The Principal Committee Officer be asked to chase up the one outstanding report.**

The meeting ended at 6.43 pm.