

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ETHICS AND STANDARDS

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

11TH FEBRUARY 2015 (5.30PM)

Present:

Councillors: D R Godwin (Chairman), J Aston (Vice-Chairman), A R Clent, B T Glass, N Knowles and T L Onslow.

Co-opted Members: Rev J A Cox.

Parish Council Representative: Councillor R Hobson.

Observers:

Councillor M J Hart.

ES.1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

ES.2 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

ES.3 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

ES.4 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following:

Rev J A Cox was not present at the meeting.

ES.5 Members Code of Conduct

The Committee received a report from the Monitoring Officer which asked Members to consider the approval of the introduction of arrangements for Councillors who use inappropriate language on social media.

The Monitoring Officer led Members through the report and advised that the Authority had a legal obligation to promote and maintain the high ethical standards that were required of Councillors, which applied to all forms of communication, including social media.

Councillor M J Hart entered the meeting at this point, (5.38pm).

A discussion ensued and a Member felt that the Code of Conduct which all Elected Members sign should be enough and any breaches of the code be referred to the Ethics and Standards Committee.

The Monitoring Officer emphasised the importance of having an arrangement in place as it was an immediate and effective way of dealing with Members misusing social media. The inappropriate post could be removed immediately to minimise the risk of dissemination.

The Leader of the Council advised that Group Leaders had supported the principle of having arrangements in place to address the use of inappropriate language on social media, at their meeting in January 2015.

An amendment to remove the last 2 paragraphs from the document set out at appendix 1 on page 9 of the report to the Committee was proposed and seconded. Following a show of hands the amendment was lost.

A proposal to insert the following wording below the final paragraph of the document was seconded:

If a Member makes 3 inappropriate posts the matter shall be referred to the Ethics and Standards Committee.

Upon a show of hands the substantive motion was passed with the amendment.

Agreed:

Pursuant to Schedule 4 of the Localism Act 2011 which places a duty on Principal Councils to promote and maintain high standards of conduct (s27), the introduction of the arrangements as detailed in the Appendix (as amended), for Members who use inappropriate language on social media be approved.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.04 pm.