

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**ETHICS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN**  
**6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2006 (6PM)**

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**PRESENT:**

Independent Members:

Mrs A McDowell (Chairman), C J Brighton (Vice Chairman) and Rev. J Cox.

Councillors:

M J Hart, Mrs S M Hayward, J A Shaw and J C Simmonds.

Parish Council Representative

Councillor R Hobson.

Observers:

There were no members present as observers.

**ES.14      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Dyke, Mrs P V Hayward and Councillor C D Nicholls.

**ES.15      APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor M J Hart was appointed as a substitute for Councillor Mrs P V Hayward and Councillor J A Shaw was appointed as a substitute for Councillor C D Nicholls.

**ES.16      DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were made.

**ES.17      MINUTES**

**DECISION:**

**The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**ES.18**      **FEEDBACK ON WEST MERCIA INDEPENDENT MEMBERS' FORUM ON  
3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2006**

The Chairman gave an oral presentation on the Independent Members' Forum she had attended in Hereford with Mr C J Brighton and Reverend J Cox on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2006.

It was noted that the Independent Members' Forum had only recently been set up. A presentation had been made to the Forum by an Officer from Hereford County Council on procedures when undertaking local investigations. The Chairman had found the presentation very useful. The Independent Members' Forum had also discussed the changes to the framework governing codes of conduct.

Members were informed that the Forum had set up an Independent Members' Register and it was hoped that through this medium the views of independent members could be fed back to the Standards Board. A letter had been sent to Sir Anthony Holland, Chairman of the Standards Board informing him of this.

The next meeting of the Independent Members' Forum would be held in Oswestry in June 2006.

**DECISION: the presentation be noted.**

**ES.19**      **PUBLICITY OF MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES IN THEIR ROLE AS DISTRICT  
COUNCILLORS**

Further to minute number ES.10 of the Committee's 20<sup>th</sup> December 2005 meeting, a report was considered from the Monitoring Officer regarding the possibility of increasing accountability of Members.

It had been suggested that Members produce an Annual Report which detailed their work and achievements during the municipal year. The Monitoring Officer had been requested to show Committee members examples of Annual Member Reports from other local authorities and a suggested template for Wyre Forest Members to use.

Members discussed the suggested template and the examples from other authorities that had been sent to them.

Members supported the principle of being held accountable and they considered the writing of an annual report would give them the opportunity to outline their work and achievements.

Independent Members endorsed the proposal for Members to produce an Annual Report as they perceived that as Members of the Ethics and Standards Committee, it was part of their role to uphold transparency and

openness.

Whilst Committee Members were unanimous in their support of Members producing an Annual Report, comment was made that not all members would write something under every heading of the suggested template but this was not thought to be a problem.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**Members produce an annual report in the format of a template at Appendix 1 of the report, detailing their activities in their role as a District Councillor, in order to increase transparency and accountability.**

**ES.20 FEEDBACK ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT CONSULTATION FOR THE STANDARDS BOARD OF ENGLAND**

Further to minute number CM.887 of the Committee's 29<sup>th</sup> March 2005 meeting, a report was considered from the Monitoring Officer that gave feedback on the Code of Conduct consultation for the Standards Board for England.

The Monitoring Officer commented that it was nice to note that the Standards Board had registered the feedback it had received from the consultation and were intending to include the changes in their revised legislation.

As soon as the new legislation was available it would be reported back to the Committee.

**DECISION:** the report be noted.

**ES.21 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**DECISION:** that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "exempt information" as defined in the relevant paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**ES.22**      **EXEMPT MINUTES**

**DECISION:**

**The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

The meeting ended at 6.15 pm.,