

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ETHICS AND STANDARDS

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

5TH DECEMBER 2011 5.30 PM

Present:

Councillors: G W Ballinger, R Bishop, H E Dyke, D R Godwin, M J Hart,
M B Kelly, C D Nicholls, N J Thomas.

Independent Members:

Rev J A Cox (Chairman), Mrs C A Noons (Vice-Chairman) and T J Hipkiss and
R Reynolds.

Observers:

Councillor P Dyke

ES.21 Apologies for Absence
There were no apologies for absence.

ES.22 Appointment of Substitutes
No substitutes were appointed.

ES.23 Declaration of Interests
No declarations of interest were made.

ES.24 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ES.25 Code of Conduct and Abolition of the Standards Board
A report was considered from the Director of Legal and Corporate Services on the abolition of the Standards Board for England and the draft Code of Conduct.

The Director outlined the content of the report and advised Members of the planned abolition of the Standards Board and that Councils in Worcestershire were working together to produce a draft code that was common to all.

Members of the Committee discussed the draft code including the need to consult with the Parish Councils in Wyre Forest. Members agreed that the Code needed to be easy to understand and follow and with appropriate sanctions. Moreover, pecuniary and none pecuniary interests were returning.

Members were advised of the timetable and were asked to send any comments regarding the Code to the Director of Legal and Corporate Services. Members also recognised that the previous code worked well, and there was a need to build on what was already there.

Decision:

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That the Monitoring Officer continues to work with other Worcestershire Councils to agree a final version of the Code of Conduct with the view of bringing the same back to the Committee for discussion and approval.**

ES.26 Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman

The Committee received a report from the Director of Community and Partnership Services on the outcome of complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman for the period April 2010 to March 2011.

Decision: The report be noted.

ES.27 Outcome of Assessment Sub-Committee Meeting

A report was considered from the Monitoring Officer informing Members of the Ethics and Standards Committee of the outcome of the recent Assessment Sub-Committee meeting.

Members of the committee were advised of the process and outcome of the hearing including the action taken as requested by the Assessment Sub-Committee.

Councillor M Hart joined the meeting at 18:08

Members debated the benefits of the Assessment Sub-Committee, in particular that the outcome was suitable for the actions demonstrated by the Councillor. However the Assessment Sub Committee Member did note that their recommendation for the offence should have been more prescriptive so that the required outcome was completed in the first instance and without prevarication.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 18:30