

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ETHICS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN ROOM/BEWDLEY ROOM, WYRE FOREST HOUSE,
FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

4TH MAY 2022 (5 PM)

Present:

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), B S Dawes, F M Oborski MBE,
M Rayner, D Ross and P W M Young.

Independent Person: T Hipkiss

Co-opted Members:

Independent Member: R Reynolds

Parish Council Representatives: Councillors R Drew and D Killingworth

ES.12 Appointment of Chairman

Councillor G Ballinger was appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

ES.13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: I Hardiman and
S Miah, Independent Member J A Cox and Parish Councillor W Mack.

ES.14 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor D Ross was appointed as substitute for Councillor I Hardiman
Councillor F M Oborski MBE was appointed as a substitute for Councillor
S Miah.

ES.15 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

ES.16 Minutes

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on the 8 September 2021 and
the Minutes of the special meeting held on 30 September 2021 be
confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

ES.17 Amended Member Code of Conduct

The Committee received a report from the Monitoring Officer to consider
recommendations in respect of the Local Government Association (LGA) new
model code of conduct.

The Monitoring Officer presented the report. She explained that the committee
was meeting to consider the new draft code which during the drafting period

had already been discussed at previous meetings of the Ethics Committee.

The Committee were advised that on this occasion the Committee would need to make a recommendation to full Council in order to formally adopt the code and enable the new code to become part of Wyre Forest District Council's (WFDC) policy framework.

A Member raised a point pertaining to the need for councillors to comply with GDPR rules when dealing with constituents' correspondence. The Monitoring Officer advised that GDPR regulations training was available for Members through the e-learning system and agreed to circulate the link to Members.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the new draft that Members have had in their committee papers, incorporated the nationwide LGA code into the existing Wyre Forest code of conduct. As per previous discussions at Ethics and Standards the code was being presented to all Ethics Committees in Worcestershire. The Monitoring Officer believed that WFDC was the last District to meet to recommend the new draft to Council.

A discussion took place relating to the ten principles of public life and disappointment that the Government has failed to enact legislation in accordance with the recommendations from the select Committee for standards in public life.

Members were asked if they were happy with the code before them this evening and invited to raise any points that they would like any further detail on.

Following discussions, the Chairman put the draft to the vote. Upon a show of hands, the vote was unanimously in favour of the new draft and the recommendations to go to full Council for adoption.

Agreed: The Ethics & Standards Committee recommends that:

- 1.1 Council adopts the amended code as detailed at appendix 1 to be applied from 11 May 2022.**
- 1.2 Delegate any minor amendments to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Ethics and Standards Committee Chair.**
- 1.3 Recommends all Town and Parish Councils within the District adopt the final amended code.**

ES.18 Any other business

The Monitoring Officer referred Members to the briefing note ***Government's Response to the Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life***, from the Chief Executive, which had been circulated to all members and substitute members of the Committee on 3 May 2022.

The Monitoring Officer presented the note and gave a brief summary of the key points. A discussion ensued and several members expressed their

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disappointment at the 'benign' response, however the Committee welcomed the Government's confirmation that Councillors can be barred from Cabinet, Committees, or representative roles, and may be publicly criticised.

The Independent Person, Mr T Hipkiss, welcomed the briefing note and thanked the Chief Executive on behalf of the Committee for the note.

Agreed: The Committee supported and welcomed the Government's response and delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to draft the recommendations to Council.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 5.32pm.