

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

3 December 2007

Attendance:

Mr P Smith (Independent Member - Chairman) (P)

Councillors:

Barratt (P)

Berry (P)

Chamberlain (P)

Lipscomb (P)

Nelmes (P)

Read (P)

Independent Members and Parish Representatives in attendance

Ms J Collins (Independent Member)

Ms M McCormack (Independent Member)

Mr M Westwell (Parish Representative)

Others in Attendance who addressed the meeting

Councillors Beveridge, Jeffs and Saunders

Others in Attendance who did not address the meeting

Councillor Bell

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S Peach (Independent Member) and Mrs L Banister (Parish Representative).

The Corporate Director (Governance) reported that Mrs Angela Clear (Parish Representative) had been elected as a City Councillor, at the Wickham Ward by election held on 22 November 2007. Therefore, she was no longer eligible to be a Parish Representative and she had forwarded her resignation accordingly. All Parish Councils would now be invited to submit nominations for a replacement representative.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 15 October 2007 be approved and adopted.

3. **'THE CODE OF CONDUCT – THE CODE UNCOVERED'**

The Committee viewed an information DVD of the above title, produced by the Standards Board for England.

4. **REVISION OF THE PLANNING PROTOCOL**

(Report [ST61](#) refers)

The Committee gave detailed consideration to the revised Protocol, attached as Appendix A to the above report, with track changes indicating where updates were proposed to conform with the revised Code of Conduct and other relevant guidance.

Following discussion, the following further amendments were agreed:-

- (a) in paragraph 1.8, the following words in the final sentence be deleted 'Regular training courses will be provided for Members on planning issues and Members are strongly encouraged to attend these courses and...', so that the final sentence will now read 'Members are reminded that attendance will be monitored by reports to the Standards Committee.'
- (b) in paragraph 2.2, the last sentence before the italic sub paragraphs be amended to read 'As specified in the Code, matters to be included in the Register include:-...'
- (c) in paragraph 2.2, sub paragraph (iv), the wording be deleted and replaced with the exact wording from the Code as follows '*the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25*'.
- (d) in paragraph 4.4, before the final sentence, the following words be inserted 'It is, however, good practice to avoid giving an opinion where possible, to prevent problems of bias/predetermination arising'.
- (e) (e) in paragraph 4.14, in the second line after the word 'Committee', the following words be inserted '...and where they have had significant prior involvement with a matter related to an application, ...' in paragraph 4.19, line three, the word 'may' be put in italics.
- (f) in paragraph 5.5, the final sentence be deleted and replaced with, 'They should ensure that any questions they ask are by way of clarification, rather than negotiation. If a Member feels that it is necessary to express an opinion, it should be made clear that this is a preliminary view and a final view will only be taken when the matter is formally considered. It is, however, good practice to avoid giving an opinion where possible, to prevent problems of bias/predetermination arising'.
- (g) in paragraph 5.6, a new final sentence be added as follows: 'Members are reminded of the importance of being cautious about comments they make in correspondence, and particularly e mails, as these items (unless relating to exempt matters) will be available for public inspection on the file'.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT, SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE AMENDMENTS, THE PLANNING PROTOCOL WITH TRACK CHANGES ATTACHED AS APPENDIX A TO THE ABOVE REPORT, BE APPROVED AND ADOPTED.

4. **MONITORING OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS BY INDEPENDENT MEMBERS AND PARISH REPRESENTATIVES**

RESOLVED:

That, subject to Mr Westwell replacing Mrs Clear for monitoring of the Planning Development Control Committee to be held on 31 January 2008, the list of meetings and the nominated observers as set out in the agenda be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 6.15pm and concluded at 8pm

Chairman