

Public Document Pack



Councillor Conduct Committee

Monday, 16 September 2013 at 6.15 pm
Room 3, Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield,
EN1 3XA

Contact: Penelope Williams
Secretary
Direct : 020-8379- 4098
Tel: 020-8379-1000
Ext: 4098
Fax: 020-8379-3177 (DST)
Textphone: 020 8379 4419
E-mail: Penelope.Williams@enfield.gov.uk
Council website: www.enfield.gov.uk

Councillors: Yasemin Brett (Chair), Tom Waterhouse (Vice-Chair), Tahsin Ibrahim
and Michael Rye OBE

Independent Person: Christine Chamberlain

AGENDA – PART 1

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary, other pecuniary or non pecuniary interests relating to items on the agenda.

3. INDEPENDENT PERSON RECRUITMENT (Pages 1 - 4)

To receive a briefing note describing the work undertaken during the recent recruitment exercise.

To agree the next steps.

4. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2013 (Pages 5 - 8)

To receive and agree the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013.

5. WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14 (Pages 9 - 10)

To note the 2013/14 work programme and agree any changes.

6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To pass a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the press and public from the meeting for any items of business moved to part 2 of the agenda on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

Briefing Note – for Councillor Conduct Committee – Monday 16 September 2013

Independent Person Recruitment

1. Advertising the Post

We placed an advertisement on two consecutive weeks in both the Enfield Advertiser and Independent. We had a page on the website with information about the position and the ability to download the application form. Advert attached.

We emailed key local voluntary organisations using the Council's voluntary organisation contact list and asked them to publicise the vacancy amongst their members.

Advertisements were placed on the web from 14 June and in the local papers on the 19 and 26 June with a closing date of 31 July 2013. This gave a six week long lead in period.

2. Responses

Initially there was some interest. We received 12 enquires. Queries were raised on the amount to be paid, the experience required and the amount of time the position would take up. Some appeared to think initially that it would be equivalent to a full time job. More enquiries came from the voluntary sector contacts than the advertisements in the press.

3. Applications Received

Only two applications were received, but these applicants did not meet the criteria for the post.

4. Suggestions for Future Recruitment

An article in Our Enfield Magazine with information about the role and including information that we are currently recruiting.

Using social media – Facebook, Twitter and Linked in

More suggestions welcome.

This page is intentionally left blank

Setting Standards at Enfield Council

Do you want to play your part in setting high ethical standards in Enfield?

As an Independent Person, you can!

Local authorities have a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct among their councillors and co-opted members. Recent changes include the introduction of Independent Persons to advise and support the Council in relation to the conduct of its members.

To be an Independent Person, you should have a keen interest in standards in public life plus a knowledge and understanding of local government or other public sector organisations. You must be able to advise and assist on decisions on councillor conduct issues. You should also be able to demonstrate an independent and analytical mind and possess tact and good interpersonal skills. Training will be provided and an allowance paid.

It is important that you are truly independent of the Council. Therefore, you must not be an employee of the authority, or be related directly to an employee or Enfield councillor. It is essential that you do not hold any political office, belong to any political party; or have been politically active in the last five years. You should also not have an unspent criminal record. Selection will be through interview.

Application forms and an information pack can be obtained via email democracy@enfield.gov.uk, by telephone: **020 8379 4098** or downloaded from www.enfield.gov.uk/democracy

For an informal discussion on the role, please contact John Austin, Monitoring Officer/Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, on 0208 379 4094 or email: john.austin@enfield.gov.uk

**The closing date for applications will be
Wednesday 31 July 2013 at 5pm**

www.enfield.gov.uk



This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE - 25.6.2013**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 2013****COUNCILLORS**

PRESENT Yasemin Brett, Tom Waterhouse, Tahsin Ibrahim, Michael Rye OBE, Christine Chamberlain (Independent Member) and Lawrence Greenberg (Standards Committee)

OFFICERS: John Austin (Assistant Director - Corporate Governance)
Penelope Williams (Secretary)

125**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially Councillor Ibrahim as he was attending his first meeting of the Committee. Apologies for absence were received from Asmat Hussain (Assistant Director Legal Services).

126**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests.

127**COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13**

The Committee received a draft copy of the Committee's Annual Report for 2012/13.

NOTED

1. There was some discussion in reference to the paragraph on the new complaints process (5.7 in the report) about how complaints could best be handled. It was suggested that the complaints process could be changed to include the following sentence:

"The Monitoring Officer has the discretion to inform the relevant chief whip of a complaint or run of complaints where it is in the interests of the member being complained about."

2. The Monitoring Officer was already providing a quarterly update informing the Committee about the complaints received.
3. Christine Chamberlain thought that it was important to maintain the integrity of the process and to ensure that the committee's distance from the process was maintained.

COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE - 25.6.2013

4. More research would be carried out to find out what other borough's do and a further report on the complaints process brought back to the next meeting of the committee.

AGREED that the annual report for 2013/14 be approved by the Committee and be referred to Council.

128

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

John Austin, Monitoring Officer, updated the Committee on the arrangements to recruit an Independent Person to replace Lawrence Greenberg, whose term of office came to an end on 30 June 2013.

- Information had been placed on the Council Website together with advertisements in the Enfield Independent and Enfield Gazette and Advertiser. Emails have also been circulated to voluntary sector groups across the borough.
- The closing date has been agreed as 31 July 2013, to allow the voluntary sector enough time to disseminate the information among their members.

NOTED

1. The Chair gave her thanks to Lawrence Greenberg who had provided sterling support to the Council for a long time which was much appreciated.
2. John Austin echoed these comments saying that he had personally very much appreciated the sound support he had received from Lawrence over the past years both as an Independent Person and as Chair of the Standards Committee.
3. Lawrence's contribution will be formally recognised, by the Mayor at the next meeting of the full Council.
4. The Vice Chair said that the Opposition had appreciated the huge difference that Lawrence had made, being well respected by both sides and creating confidence in the Council's standards regime. His independence had ensured that there was trust in the system when a complaint came in.
5. Lawrence Greenberg thanked everyone for their comments and said that he had enjoyed working with such a great bunch of people.

AGREED that the Interviews for the new Independent Person would be held at the next meeting of the Councillor Conduct Committee in September.

129

COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE - 25.6.2013

WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Committee received a copy of the draft work programme for 2013/14. This could change as the year progressed.

NOTED

1. John Austin was planning to brief Groups on the Code of Conduct.
2. Suggestions for training included reminding members of the importance of being aware of the dangers of including information on the internet and in social media, in blogs, posts and tweets which could bring the office of councillor into disrepute.
3. Lawrence Greenberg felt that one should assume that anything said on social media will end up in the newspapers on the following day.
4. Training should be carried out both for existing councillors and as a core part of the induction for new councillors, after the council elections in May 2014. It was felt this training should be mandatory.
5. It was felt that it would also be useful to cover information governance issues including the classification of information, data protection and computer training.

AGREED

1. That John Austin would bring back proposals for member training, to a future meeting of the Committee.
2. To approve the work programme for 2013/14.

130

MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 2 MAY 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

131

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED the dates agreed for future meetings of the Committee:

- Thursday 5 September 2013
- Tuesday 3 December 2013
- Tuesday 25 March 2013

132

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE - 25.6.2013

AGREED to pass a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the press and public from the meeting for the following item (Complaint Against Councillor - Update) moved from the Part 1 to Part 2 agenda on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 (information relating to an individual) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information Variation Order 2006).

133

COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS

John Austin, Monitoring Officer, reported on the complaints he was dealing with:

- No further information has been received on the complaint being investigated by the Police and Criminal Prosecution Service, despite many enquiries.
- A complaint against a councillor about an article in the press continued to be investigated by an external investigator, appointed from a panel of solicitors held by Legal.
- There had been two to three complaints around an issue that occurred at the Planning Committee in March 2013. The allegations have been investigated and the councillor concerned spoken to. The councillor has indicated that they felt that they had been misunderstood, but are willing to apologise. A response from the complainants to the offer of an apology is awaited.
- A complaint had been received from a resident stating that they had been misled by a councillor, but there was no written evidence. This had been discussed with an Independent Person and it had been agreed that unless any written evidence could be provided no further action should be taken.
- Two complaints one from each party had been received that the other political party had included council email and phone details in party political leaflets. The Monitoring Officer had written to all concerned.

Councillor Conduct Committee: Work Programme 2013/14

ITEM	Lead/ Support Officer	25 June 2013	5 September 2013	3 December 2013	25 March 2014
Annual Report	John Austin	To approve the 2012/13 Annual Report			Outline Annual Report 2013/14
Work Programme 2013/14	John Austin	To Agree the Outline Work Programme for 2013/14	Updated Work Programme Monitoring	Updated Work Programme Monitoring	Updated Work Programme Monitoring
Review of Complaints Process	John Austin/ Legal			Review	
Review of Terms of Reference	John Austin				Review
Training Programme – Identifying areas for training	John Austin Asmat Hussain				
Update on Complaints	John Austin/Asmat Hussain	Update	Update	Update	Update
Pre and Post Election Arrangements	John Austin				Report

The appointment of Independent Persons will take place at separate meetings which will be arranged as required.

This page is intentionally left blank