

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2012**

**COUNCILLORS**

**PRESENT** Yasemin Brett (Chair), Tom Waterhouse, Chris Murphy and Michael Rye OBE

**OFFICERS:** John Austin (Assistant Director - Corporate Governance) and Asmat Hussain (Assistant Director Legal) Penelope Williams (Secretary)

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**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.

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**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

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**OTHER PECUNIARY AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

The Committee received a list of different possible scenarios where interests will need to be declared.

John Austin, Monitoring Officer, highlighted the following and the list of scenarios was discussed:

- Under the new code of conduct there are now three types of interest; disclosable pecuniary, other pecuniary and non pecuniary.
- Members will be briefed on the new types of interest, at both group meetings.
- In scenario 1, a member of the Planning Committee receives the agenda of the next meeting and notices that there is a planning application for the redevelopment of 56 High Street into shops and flats. The member's spouse works for a retail company situated opposite the site at no: 43. This would be a disclosable pecuniary interest.
- The Council meeting is considering grant applications to voluntary bodies. The Council has nominated members to some of the bodies concerned and a number of those members are on the respective management committees. The member has a non pecuniary interest.

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- A member has received a bottle of wine from a local resident as a thank you for helping them with a local issue. The member must declare all gifts worth more than £25. Even if they refuse the gift, it should still be declared.
- A member of the Licensing Committee has seen on an agenda an application from one of their neighbours. This depends on whether the neighbour is a close personal associate. If so, they would have a disclosable pecuniary interest and should not take part in making a decision on the application.
- A member has acquired a second property in the Borough and intends to lease it to the Council for a social tenancy. This would be a disclosable pecuniary interest. If the tenant were in receipt of housing benefit this would also be disclosable.
- A member's son has just been appointed to a post within the council. This should be declared as a disclosable pecuniary interest.

### NOTED

1. A question had arisen, raised as part of a motion at the last Council meeting, about the declaring of interests when making applications to the Enfield Residents Priority Fund. Officers are working on revising the form and guidance to address the concerns. If members are putting forward an application where they have no prior connection they would not have to declare an interest, even if it was in their ward.
2. John Austin asked the committee to put forward any other examples that would be helpful to members when completing the forms.
3. Any disclosable pecuniary interest must be registered within 28 days of becoming aware of it and declaring it at a meeting.

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#### DECLARATION OF INTERESTS FORM

Members received a copy of a draft declaration of interests' registration form which is based on the new Councillor Code of Conduct.

John Austin advised that the form will be sent to members shortly, replacing the existing forms; there will be briefings at each of the group meetings to explain the changes.

### NOTED

1. The suggestion that worked examples be included with the forms to help members complete them.

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2. The 28 days allowed for updating the form was a statutory requirement.
3. The suggestion that a reminder of the fact that disclosable pecuniary interests must be registered within 28 days, is published once a month in the Members Newsletter.
4. Sensitive information, which if published could be detrimental could be kept private, subject to the approval of the Monitoring Officer.
5. At the briefings it will need to be emphasised that the interests to be declared will also apply to spouses, other family members and close associates.
6. All memberships of public bodies and charitable organisations must be declared.
7. A representative selection of possible membership organisations should be included on the form.
8. Interests should be declared if there is any possibility of an impact upon any of Enfield Council's business interests.
9. As a minimum, members will have to declare their partner's employment interests.
10. The word "pecuniary" should be taken out of paragraph 3 in the disclosure sheet.
11. When issuing the new forms it would be helpful to attach the member's old form for information.
12. The guidance and form will be amended to take account of the comments made at this meeting. John Austin would circulate the amended documents for final comment, before they were issued to all members.

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### **UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS**

John Austin updated members on the recruitment of independent persons.

NOTED that

1. At the meeting held on Monday 8 October 2012, the Committee agreed to recommend to the full Council meeting, due to take place on 7 November 2012, that Lawrence Greenberg be appointed to the position of Independent Person at Enfield Council.

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2. Recruitment will begin shortly to fill the remaining vacancy. Advance notice will be circulated to the voluntary sector informing them when adverts will be placed in the press, giving a longer lead in time.
3. Details will be included on the Council Website.
4. Councillor Rye said that he would send John Austin details of a website including adverts for similar positions in public bodies. Including in publications for magistrates might generate some more interest.

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#### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 AUGUST 2012**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 August were agreed as a correct record.

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#### **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

NOTED the dates agreed for future meetings of the Committee:

- Wednesday 16 January 2013
- Thursday 14 March 2013
- Thursday 2 May 2013