

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2015**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Claire Stewart, Elaine Hayward, Donald McGowan and Joanne Laban, Christine Chamberlain (Independent Person) and Sarah Jewell (Independent Person)

OFFICERS: Asmat Hussain (Assistant Director Legal), Jill Bayley (Principal Lawyer - Safeguarding), Esther Hughes (Team Leader Consumer Protection) and Sean Newton (Planning Officer) 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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PLANNING AND LICENSING CODES OF CONDUCT

The Committee received copies of the existing planning and licensing codes of practice taken from the Council's Constitution.

1. Licensing and Gambling Code of Conduct

Esther Hughes, Team Leader Consumer Protection, advised the committee, highlighting the following:

- The Licensing and Gambling Code was last been revised in 2008, and so was due a refresh.
- A Training session had been organised for all members of the Licensing Committee on 14 October 2015. During this session the members would be given the opportunity to review to code.
- There were some areas of duplication and overlap that could be removed. Rules on the declaration of gifts and hospitality for example were already covered in the Councillors Code of Conduct.

AGREED that officers would take carry out a review of the current code in consultation with Licensing Committee members and bring a revised copy back to December's meeting.

2. Planning Committee Code of Practice

Sean Newton, Principal Planning Officer, advised the committee highlighting the following:

- The existing code was quite long and could be streamlined.
- Officers would review and suggest changes.
- All new members of the planning committee received training before taking up their positions.
- Other sessions were frequently organised, before Planning Committee meetings, to brief members on particular issues.
- The Planning Advisory Service had recently carried out a review of planning committee processes and had suggested changes which had been adopted. The number of members had been reduced from 15 to 12 as it was thought that this smaller number could achieve a similar outcome. Members also now sat alphabetically to help avoid perceptions of bias.

2.2 Questions/Comments

2.2.1 It was felt that regular refresher sessions should be organised for members who had been on the committee for several years, to ensure that they were kept up to date with changes.

2.2.2 Briefing sessions are held on particular issues as necessary.

2.2.3 The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Business Development was invited, but not required, to attend planning committee meetings.

AGREED that the code and guidance would be revised and brought back to the committee in December.

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DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CHECKS

The Committee received a report on requirements for checks under the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), previously known as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Checks.

1. Presentation of Report

Jill Bayley (Principal Lawyer) presented the report to the Committee highlighting the following:

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- The report had come about as a result of the outcomes from the enquiry into the recent problems in Rotherham. The enquiry had found that Rotherham councillors had not received the appropriate DBS checks.
- It was therefore felt that Enfield should adopt a policy to ensure that procedures and policy were put in place to ensure that members were subject to the necessary checks as appropriate.
- It was proposed that all members with a function or responsibility relating to children, vulnerable adults or education should have DBS checks.
- Members should request checks within 14 days of appointment.

2. Questions/Comments

- 2.1 Currently the checks are valid until officers are aware that there may be problem.
- 2.2 Checks are required for each role undertaken. If a member has a check for a position as school governor for example they would still need another one for their work as a democratic member at the Council.
- 2.3 Members will be reminded that if anything happens to change their status that they will be responsible for declaring it.
- 2.4 It was suggested that new checks would be required every 4 years. It would make sense to renew all checks after the local council elections.

AGREED

1. That the Councillor Conduct Committee would support the recommendation that there should be a policy to require all members of the Cabinet, Shadow Cabinet, all members of any committee with a social care function, whether relating to adults or children, all members with any education function and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to have current DBS checks.
2. The policy should include the requirement that checks are carried out every 4 years, usually after the local council elections.
3. That the policy be referred for comment to the Member and Democratic Services Group.

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COUNCILLOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 2015/16

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The Committee received a report updating members on the member development programme for 2015/16.

NOTED

1. The request for party whips to encourage their members to attend the training.
2. Officers would be contacted to ensure that all training available to members was included on the list.

AGREED to note progress on the programme.

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UPDATE ON COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS

Asmat Hussain, Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that she had received one complaint since the last meeting. Christine Chamberlain, Independent Person, had been consulted. The complaint had been dealt with informally and an apology received and accepted.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2015 were received and agreed as a correct record.

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WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

The Committee received and noted the work programme for 2015/16.

It was also noted that the review of the protocol for Member Officer Relations would be considered at the 24 March 2016 meeting.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED the dates agreed for future meetings of the Committee:

- Wednesday 2 December 2015
- Thursday 24 March 2016