

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 at 6.00 pm  
in Committee Room 3 at the Council House, Dudley

### **PRESENT:-**

The Bishop of Dudley (Independent Chairman)  
Councillors Ms Craigie, J R Davies, Fraser-Macnamara, Kettle,  
Tomkinson and Tyler; Miss L Smith

### **OFFICERS**

The Director of Law and Property, Assistant Director Legal and  
Democratic Services and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law and  
Property).

#### 14 **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of  
Councillor Ms Partridge

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#### 15 **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBER**

It was noted that Councillor Tomkinson had been appointed as a  
substitute member for Councillor Ms Partridge for this meeting of the  
Committee only.

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#### 16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member made a declaration of interest, in accordance with Members'  
Code of Conduct, in respect of any matter to be considered at this  
meeting.

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#### 17 **MINUTES**

##### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup>  
October, 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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18

MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

It was reported that, in connection with the Members' Allowances Scheme (Minute 7), the three political group leaders on the Council had yet to meet to consider the matter. The Chairman was asked to contact the Members involved in this regard.

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MEMBERS' PLANNING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted on amendments to the Members' Planning Code of Good Practice. A copy of the Planning Code of Good Practice indicating amendments, as a result of the new Members' Code of Conduct approved in July, 2007, was attached at Appendix 1. The revised draft also included a number of changes recommended by officers by way of clarification or to emphasise the importance of a particular issue.

One particular change referred to was that involving members' personal and prejudicial interests in a matter in that they could now make use of the public speaking scheme to address the meeting of Development Control Committee on the proposal but unlike an ordinary member of the public they would then have to withdraw from the room whilst the meeting considered the proposal.

It was noted that this change, together with others, would be illustrated on the DVD of the Standards Board for England – 'The Code Uncovered' to be viewed later in the meeting.

RESOLVED

That, subject to the comments of the Development Control Committee, the Council be recommended to approve the revised Members' Planning Code of Good Practice attached at Appendix 1 to the report submitted.

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DIGEST OF RECENT DECISIONS BY THE ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR ENGLAND

A report of the Monitoring Officer was submitted on a digest of three cases recently considered by the Adjudication Panel for England.

Arising from the presentation given by the Monitoring Officer on the content of the report submitted, members commented that the details of the three cases given were good examples and that they should be brought to the attention of all members of the Council and form part of future training sessions.

In response to the comments made the Monitoring Officer reported that those members who did not attend the member training on the Code of Conduct to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2008, at which the DVD referred to earlier in the meeting would be shown and the points raised in the report emphasised, would be sent a copy of the report submitted. The Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services also referred to a training session to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2008, for members of the Development Control Committee at which the DVD would also be shown and he would also reinforce points made from the report. It was further noted that relevant officers would also be made aware of the content of the report at the training sessions to be held.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on a digest of three cases recently considered by the Adjudication Panel for England, and as reported at the meeting, be noted.

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21

DVD OF STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND 'THE CODE UNCOVERED'

At this juncture the Committee viewed a DVD of the Standards Board for England – 'The Code Uncovered' which highlighted aspects of the Members' Code of Conduct by reference to a fictitious meeting of a planning committee and relevant issues both prior to, during and after the meeting.

Following the viewing of the DVD a discussion ensued on the various points made.

RESOLVED

That the content of the DVD of the Standards Board for England – 'The Code Uncovered' be noted together with the information that, as previously indicated, all members of the Council had been invited to attend a member training event on either 7<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2008, to view the DVD and take part in a discussion on its content following viewing.

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APPOINTMENT OF THIRD INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE

The Monitoring Officer reported that ,arising from the last meeting of the Committee, the Council at its meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2007, had approved the recommendation of the Committee that the number of independent members serving on the Committee be increased from two to three in the light of the new arrangements for the local handling of complaints to be introduced from April, 2008. The Council had also authorised the Committee to interview appropriate candidates and to make an appointment.

It was also noted that a public notice inviting persons to apply for the appointment would appear in local newspapers on Thursday.

In view of this, and arising from consideration of the arrangements for interviewing candidates, it was

#### RESOLVED

That the interviewing panel, to interview appropriate candidates and to make an appointment for a third independent member to serve on the Standards Committee, comprise the Chairman, Miss L Smith and one member from each of the political groups serving on the Committee, to be identified in due course, and that interviews be held on a date and at a time to be arranged.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

CHAIRMAN