

Supplementary Report of the Standards Committee

The Committee met again at County Hall, Northallerton on Wednesday, 9 May, 2007. Present:- James F S Daghish in the Chair. County Councillors Brian Marshall and J W Marshall. Independent Member: Ms Gillian Fleming.

2. New Code of Conduct for Members – The Committee considered a report on the issues which are set out in the report to Council, circulated with the agenda. The Committee decided not to recommend any local additions to the Code.

The Committee has taken this opportunity to consider afresh whether appointments of non voting co-opted members, who are not members of another relevant authority, should still be conditional on the member concerned agreeing to be bound by the Code of Conduct. The Committee balanced the public interest in requiring such members to declare and register their interests, against the difficulties encountered in practice, for example, that on occasion such members are prevented from participating in the very matters on which they have been invited to contribute. The Committee concluded and now recommends to Council that such appointments should not continue to be made conditional on signing up to the Code and its requirements but that, instead, such members, on appointment, should be given a statement of general standards of ethical behaviour expected by the Council and such members should give an assurance to act in accordance with it.

In respect of the County Council's resolution, in October 2002, relating to named substitute co-opted members, set out on page 9.5 of the report, the Committee has decided, for the sake of consistency and clarity, to recommend to Council that the provision be changed to allow voting substitute members to be subject to the same timescales for the registration of their interests as other co-opted members.

The Standards Committee RECOMMENDS –

- a) that the new Code of Conduct for Members, attached at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved and adopted, in place of the existing Code, from 16 May 2007;
- b) that the General Principles be included as a non enforceable annex to the Code;
- c) that the existing guidance protocol for Members in support of the Code be amended as set out in Appendix 4 to the report;
- d) that the Code should not continue to apply to non voting co-opted members who are not members of another relevant authority, and that all appointments/re-appointments of such co-opted members to County Council Committees should not continue to be subject to the person appointed agreeing to observe the County Council's Code of Conduct for Members for the time being in force. Instead, such members, on appointment, should be given a statement of the general standards of ethical behaviour expected by the Council and such members should give an assurance to act in accordance with it;
- e) that all appointments/re-appointments of named voting substitute co-opted members be subject to the person appointed agreeing to observe the County Council's Code of Conduct for Members, for the time being in force, including the declaration of interests and registration of interests in the public register of members interests;

f) that the Constitution be amended to reflect the above.

JAMES DAGLISH
Chairman of the Standards Committee

County Hall,
NORTHALLERTON.

9 May, 2007