

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
28 MAY 2012**

Present: Independent members: -
Mrs S Fellows (in the Chair)
Mr R Spiring

Councillors Daniel, Roberts, Rogers.

Apologies were received from Councillor Davies.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared their interests in the minute indicated: -

Councillor	Minute	Interest
Daniel	3 – Code of Conduct and Revised Standards Arrangements – Localism Act 2011	Personal – Member of East Sussex County Council.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 01 December 2011 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**3. CODE OF CONDUCT AND REVISED STANDARDS
ARRANGEMENTS – LOCALISM ACT 2011**

Christine Barkshire-Jones, Chief Legal Officer, presented a report updating Members on the steps required to comply with the Localism Act 2011, and to seek Members' views on the draft Code of Conduct and revised Standards Arrangements set out in Appendix 1, 2, and 3 of the report.

The report noted that the Council is required to agree and put in place its arrangements for standards and Members Code of Conduct by 1st July 2012.

Councillor Daniel raised the point that in the Code of Conduct the registerable interest of £25 for Members wasn't sufficient, and asked that the figure be increased to £50, bringing it in line with the current East Sussex County Council fee. This is to aid consistency across the councils. The Group agreed to this amendment.

Members highlighted the lack of provision for an appeals process built into the Act. It was agreed that the Chief Legal Officer would undertake to liaise with officers from other East Sussex authorities to seek their views on an appeals process and report back to Standards Committee. It was thought that local

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authorities will be in a better position to discuss whether an appeal process would be necessary when the new code and arrangements had been in place for three to six months.

The Group discussed the provisions in the Act relating to the appointment of independent members. Members were in agreement that it would be beneficial to appoint independent members via a 'pool' of members. This is to be organised by East Sussex County Council. The Group expressed their thanks to the current independent members for the work they have done thus far.

RESOLVED that: -

- 1. the Committee recommends to Cabinet that, the Council be recommended to:**
- 2. Adopt the Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 1 to take effect from 1st July 2012, with additional amendments as noted above.**
- 3. Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee and the Chief Legal Officer, to make any necessary changes to the Hearings (Appendix 2) and Investigations procedures (Appendix 3) in order to comply with the regulations when published.**
- 4. Appoint a local Standards Committee to consist of five members of Hastings Borough Council.**
- 5. The Monitoring Officer be delegated authority to proceed with the appointment of Individual Persons in accordance with the yet to be published regulations**

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.36pm)