

Epping Forest Local Councils Joint Standards Committee

Constitution

The Committee

1. There shall be a Joint Standards Committee of all the parish and town councils in the Epping Forest District [the following local councils:
Buckhurst Hill Parish Council
Epping Town Council
Lambourne Parish Council
Loughton Town Council
Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers Parish Council
Nazeing Parish Council
North Weald Bassett Parish Council
Ongar Town Council
Stanford Rivers Parish Council
Stapleford Abbots Parish Council
Theydon Bois Parish Council
Waltham Abbey Town Council
“the original signatory councils”] to be known as the Epping Forest Local Councils Joint Standards Committee, hereinafter referred to as “The JSC”.
2. The JSC shall be a Joint Committee as provided for under sections 101(6) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

Purpose

3. The purpose of the JSC shall be to provide for panels or sub-committees to consider complaints against parish and town councillors, as required under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, and to consider such matters concerned with ethics and standards in general, the registration of interests, coordination with other authorities, adaptations of the Code, and such other matters as shall be thought appropriate by the monitoring officer.

Membership

4. Each Local Council shall appoint one representative (and a substitute if the Council concerned so wishes). Each representative (or the substitute if the representative is absent) will have one vote.

Annual and Ordinary Meetings

5. There shall be an annual meeting of the JSC in the month of November or December 2012 and in each November or December following.

6. Ordinary meetings of the JSC shall be summoned by the Clerk, acting after consulting the Chairman and Monitoring Officer

Meetings of Panels

7. The Clerk, acting on the advice of the Monitoring Officer, may summon meetings of panels of not fewer than 3 nor more than 5 members of the JSC in order to consider individual complaints or grouped complaints. In doing so, as far as possible, members shall be chosen who are
 - a. unconnected with any of the parties to a complaint; and
 - b. do not come from the local council against whose member the complaint is made.
8. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the JSC shall be appointed at the initial meeting of the JSC and thereafter each year by the annual meeting of the participating councils as is provided under paragraph 4 of this constitution.
9. The Clerk of the JSC shall be the clerk of the local council from which the chairman from time to time has been elected, save that if the Council concerned so requests, the Clerk from an alternative local council may be substituted. The Joint Committee shall nominate a pool of clerks who may act as substitutes

Governance & Related Issues

10. The Monitoring Officer for the time being of the Epping Forest District shall be the Monitoring Officer for the JSC, and he or she may appoint such deputies or investigating officers as he/she thinks fit.
11. The rate to be offered to investigators in connection with complaints regarding breaches of the Code of Conduct by Parish or Town Councillors shall be as determined by the Monitoring officer and reported to each annual meeting of the JSC.
12. Service of individual members of the JSC or its panels shall be counted as approved duties of the local council of which they are a member, and any expenses shall met by that Council in accordance with that Council's remuneration scheme, if any.
13. The JSC shall appoint one or more Independent Persons as provided for by Section 28 of the Localism Act, and these shall normally be the same Independent persons as are appointed by the Epping Forest District Council. Any allowance or remuneration allocated to such independent persons by the District Council shall be deemed to cover duties performed for the Joint Committee.

14. An Independent Person as appointed under paragraph 13 may attend ordinary and annual meetings of the JSC as a non-voting member.
15. Except as provided for above, the means of proceeding of the JSC and its panels shall be insofar as it reasonably can be, as laid down for the Standards Committee for Epping Forest District Council as set out in its Constitution.

Changes in Affiliated Councils

16. A parish council which is not an original signatory council to this agreement for the JSC may give notice in writing to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer of its wish to join the JSC and accede to the benefits and obligations of the JSC. Such accession shall come into force 14 days after the date of such notice.
17. A parish council which wishes to cease to be a member of the JSC shall give written notice to the clerk and monitoring officer, and such notice shall become effective at the beginning of the Annual Meeting next following.

Expenses

18. Any expenses of the clerk appointed to act a Secretary to the JSC shall be borne by the Parish Council by which he or she is employed. If expenses for clerking or accommodation accrue out of any complaint, these may be recharged to the Council against whose member the complaint has been made.
19. The expenses of any investigation and any out-of-hours attendance by the Monitoring Officer and his/her deputy at an investigation shall be paid by the District Council and recharged at cost to the local council whose member is the subject of that investigation.
20. Where any notice is required by this constitution or by statute applied to the JSC, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered validly by email unless there is a statutory requirement for such a notice to be given in another way.

Review of the Constitution

21. The Committee may, at each Annual Meeting or at such other meeting as may be appropriate, review this Constitution subject to any advice from the Monitoring officer. An initial review to be undertaken by the Committee no later than 18 months from being first established.