

Meeting                    **REGIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Date                        **TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2010 – 2.00 PM**

Report of                 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE, LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY**

Subject                    **WHAT MAKES A GOOD STANDARDS COMMITTEE?**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report discusses some publications that touch on highly effective Standards Committees. Whilst there is no blue print for a successful committee there are elements that can be taken from various documents without being too prescriptive.

### **Commentary**

2. At the last Leicestershire Standards Committee meeting Members considered the annual review of the Standards for England and asked the Chief Executive to discover further information about two issues of notable practice. First Leicester City Council had given advice in relation to activities helping members to follow the code of conduct by producing a guide to declaring interests at ward community meetings that were being used by members. I am grateful to Leicester City Council for agreeing to consider this on our agenda. A copy of their guidance is found at **Annex A** to this report. Members will see that the guidance gives helpful examples for the reader on whether or not an interest will arise.
3. Swindon Borough Council have been commended for their partnerships master-class. At the time of writing this report no information has been able to be obtained from Swindon regarding their activity.
4. Police Authorities have been subject to inspections commencing September 2009. A thematic report was published in February regarding the first ten inspections. The thematic report contained positive, albeit sparse, comments about Standards Committees. The report indicated all Police Authorities promote high standards of governance and ethical behaviour for themselves and their Forces.

### **Recommendation**

5. Members are requested to note the report.

**Implications**

Financial: none. Legal: none. Diversity: none. Risk Management: none.

**Background Papers**

None.

**Officer to Contact**

Robert Swinfield, Chief Executive, Leicestershire Police Authority.

Tel: 0116 229 8980. Email: [police.authority@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:police.authority@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk)

**LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL**

**TO ALL MEMBERS**

**A BRIEF GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS AT COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

Several Members and officers have asked for clarification and advice regarding declaring interests at Community Meetings. As Community Meetings deal with issues of local interest, it is likely that many Councillors will have an interest to declare at some point.

Overleaf is a flow chart that can be used as a guide to identify 1) whether you have an interest, 2) whether it is personal or prejudicial, and 3) what you should do in each case. Also included are some practical examples of issues that may arise at Community Meetings.

Here are some general points to bear in mind when considering whether you have an interest:

- Although Community Meetings do not currently have decision-making powers, rules on interests still apply.
- Rules on interests only apply to the formal part of the meeting, not the information fairs.
- As the public have a right to speak at Community Meetings, Members with a prejudicial interest also have the right to speak and make representations, however, upon speaking, the Member must leave the room immediately and take no further part in the item's consideration, decision-making or vote.
- Members are advised to check the agenda in advance, so that appropriate and accurate advice can be given. (It is often difficult to give proper advice during a meeting when an officer may not know all the facts.)
- Although not a direct interests issue, were a Member to give a view at a Community Meeting on an item of business, either for or against, which then later comes to Planning & Development Control or Licensing, then the Member may not be able to take part in the determination of such an application.

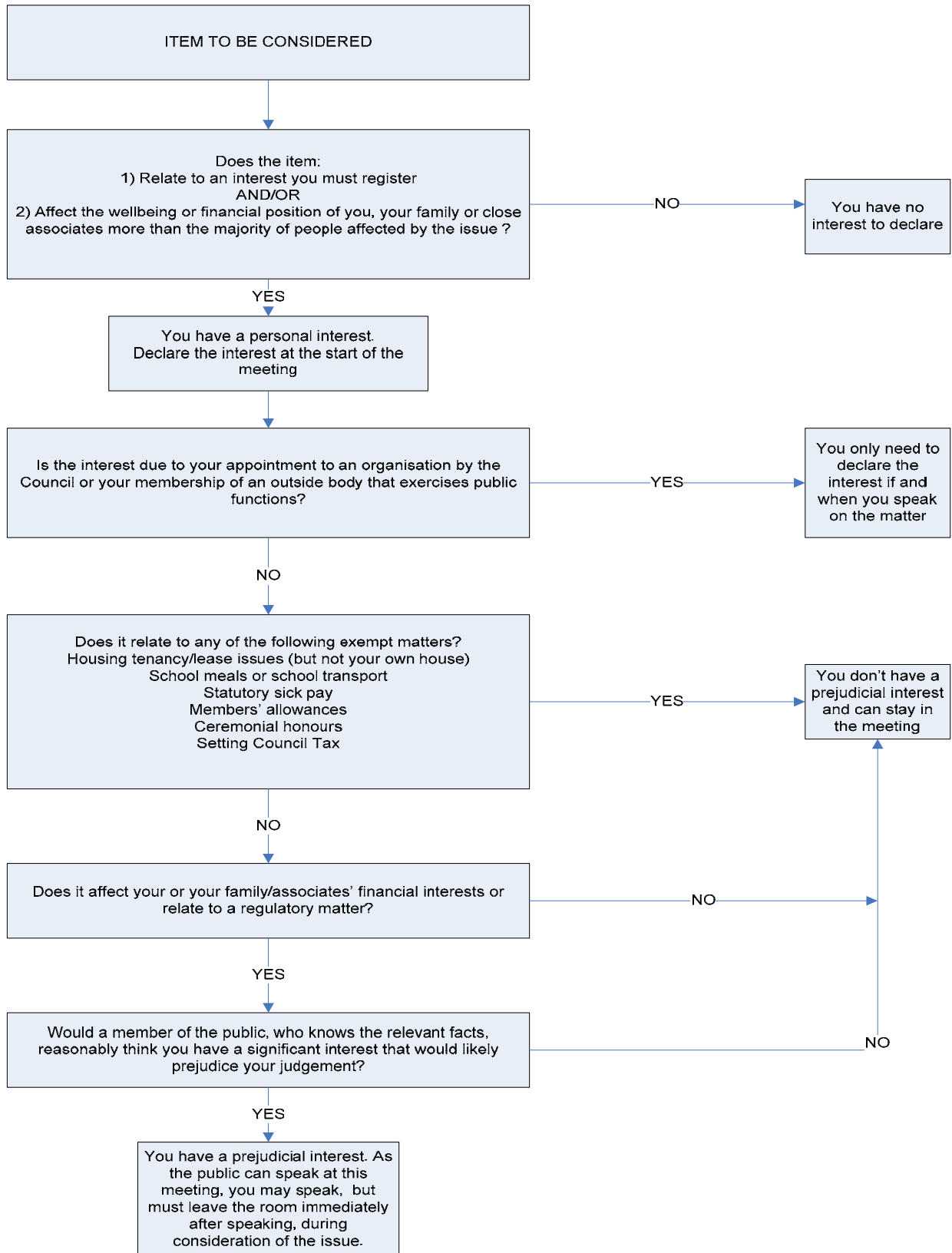
Please note that this information and the flow chart is only a basic guide and does not replace the full rules in the Code of Conduct or Code of Practice for Development Control Decisions.

Officers in Democratic Support will be happy to discuss and advise on individual issues further if necessary.

Yours sincerely

Heather Kent  
Democratic Services Officer

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS FLOWCHART FOR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST



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## **SOME EXAMPLES**

- 1) Governors of a local primary school have submitted a funding request for a new piece of play equipment. Councillor A is a Council-appointed governor at the school.

*As Councillor A is appointed by the Council to this post, it is classed as a personal interest. He should declare the interest only if he/she wishes to speak on the matter. They can take full part in the meeting and vote.*

- 2) A local residents' association has requested funding for a security gate to be installed across an alley way between two houses. Councillor B is a member of the association and lives in one of the houses next to the alley.

*Councillor B has a prejudicial interest in two aspects – 1) as a member of the association who will receive the money and 2) as the owner of an affected property which will benefit directly from the gate. The prejudicial interest should be declared. Councillor B can speak at the meeting, but should leave immediately after speaking, before the matter is discussed further.*

- 3) Councillor C's son is a member of a local football club. The club is requesting funding for new kit.

*Councillor C has a prejudicial interest, as her son will directly benefit. Councillor C can speak at the meeting, but should leave immediately after speaking, before the matter is discussed further.*

- 4) A major planning application for a housing development on derelict land is to be discussed at the Community Meeting. Councillor D is not a member of the Planning & Development Control Committee, but his house backs on to the site.

*Councillor D has a prejudicial interest as it relates to a planning matter they will directly affect him. Councillor D can speak at the meeting, but should leave immediately after speaking, before the matter is discussed further.*

- 5) A local community association has requested funding for computer equipment. Councillor E was a member of the association until two months ago.

*Councillor E has no interest, as she is no longer a member of the association.*

- 6) An item is on the agenda regarding replacing play equipment on a local park with equipment suitable for children up to 14 years. Councillor F lives opposite the play area and objects to the age that the new equipment will be aimed at, as he feels that it should be aimed at younger children, up to the age of 7 years.

*Councillor F has a personal interest which should be declared, as he will be affected to a greater extent than most other people in the ward, as he lives opposite. He does not have a prejudicial interest, as it does not involve matters of a financial or regulatory nature. He can, therefore, take full part in the discussion.*