

**Committee:** STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
**Date:** 21 APRIL 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 2  
**Title:** REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS  
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### **Summary**

- 1 Members will recall that a report was submitted to this Committee in April 2003 setting out the circumstances where the Committee could grant dispensations permitting Members of Parish Councils to take part in meetings notwithstanding the fact that they would be otherwise prevented from doing so by virtue of the Code of Conduct
- 2 This report is to advise Members of requests received and likely to be received for dispensations from Members of Broxted Parish Council

### **Background**

- 3 The Parish of Broxted is particularly affected by the Government White Paper on the Future of Aviation. All of the Parish Councillors will be affected if a second runway is built at the airport.
- 4 Arguably this does not create a prejudicial interest. A prejudicial interest is one which affects Councillors to a greater extent than other members of the community (in this case the parish) they serve. If all residents in the parish are equally affected then the interests of Councillors would not be prejudicial within this definition.
- 5 However apart from the physical implications of any future development there may be issues surrounding the voluntary compensation scheme which BAA are currently consulting on. Members of the Parish Council clearly wish to be able to debate all matters relating to the airport at Council meetings and do not wish to risk being reported to the Standards Board for England for doing so. They have therefore decided to apply to this Committee for dispensations to allow them to speak and vote on matters regarding the airport notwithstanding any potential prejudicial interest.
- 6 The criteria for eligibility for dispensations is met in the case of all Council Members. The issues surrounding the airport are sensitive and of great public interest. Parish constituents may feel disenfranchised if their representatives are unable to discuss the airport at Parish Council Meetings. Members of the Parish Council themselves feel strongly that they ought to have a voice on such an important issue which whilst part of government policy has immense local impact.

- 7 All Members of the Parish Council have applied for dispensations. This Committee will need to consider each application and determine whether to grant a dispensation, if so how long the dispensation should last and whether it should extend to speaking and voting or merely speaking.

RECOMMENDED that Members:-

- 1 determine whether to grant dispensations in respect of any applications received and if so on what terms
- 2 if dispensations are granted whether the Committee wishes to offer any guidance to Members as to the conduct of any meetings when the dispensations are used.

Background Papers: Applications for dispensations from Broxted Parish Councillors