



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 30 APRIL 2018**

Held at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area B, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road,
West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors R Adair (Chairman), K Beardsall, M Buckle, S Mallender and
F Purdue-Horan

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

J Baggaley (Independent Person for Standards Matters)
A Wood (Independent Member)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

T Coop	Constitutional Services Officer
J Crowle	Solicitor
G O'Connell	Monitoring Officer

APOLOGIES:

G Norbury and K White
Kerry White joined the meeting on a conference call

14 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mallender declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 4, cases
update 2017-18 case references 2/18 and 3/18.

**15 Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 January 2018 and of the Standards
Committee Sub-Committee of 22 February 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 29
January, 2018 be approved as true record.
- b) the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee-Sub Committee
(Standards Hearing Panel) held on 22 February, 2018 be approved as a
true record.

16 Cases Update 2017/18

The Monitoring Officer provided a report to update the committee on the
number of complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Councillor's Code of
Conduct. The report highlighted that since the last meeting on 29 January 2018
there had been a further three cases received, with each of these cases being
dealt with by the Monitoring Officer, giving due regard to the Councillors
Complaints Procedure and, where appropriate the Independent Person had

been consulted.

The Monitoring Officer reported that a further two cases had been received, being complaints from two Borough Councillors about actions of another Borough Councillor. The Monitoring Officer advised that he had requested further details from the complainant and would provide the formal decision at the next meeting. Councillor Mallender, who had declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item, was advised by the Monitoring Officer that as he had not yet received full details of the case, and that as a full investigation had not yet commenced, Councillor Mallender was not required to leave the room during the discussion of the item.

The Monitoring Officer reported that case number 1/8 had been rejected following an initial appraisal. The case had involved a social media post whereby a Councillor had made a personal comment on a social media platform, but had not made the comment in their capacity as a Councillor. The Monitoring Officer noted that the Performance, Reputation and Constitutional Services Manager had provided a presentation on e-Media at the last Town and Parish Forum advising that extreme care must be taken when using social media platforms.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the Monitoring Officer be noted.

17 **Proposals to Revise the Councillors' Code of Conduct**

The Monitoring Officer provided a report for the Committee to consider and comment on potential amendments to the Borough Council's Councillors Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer added that originally revisions of the Code of Conduct would have formed part of the work of the Task and Finish Group when revising the Constitution, however the Group had been concerned that this could delay the adoption of the revised Constitution so had removed the Councillor's Code of Conduct from the scope of the Group.

The Monitoring Officer advised that revising the Code of Conduct would involve speaking to more stakeholders than reviewing the other parts of the Constitution had required, given the need to involve the Standards Committee, the Corporate Governance Group, full Council, Town and Parish Councils (most of which adopted the Borough Council's Code of Conduct) as well as individual Borough Councillors who would be affected by its provisions.

The Committee considered the Borough Council's current Code of Conduct and those of Gedling Borough Council and Nottingham City Council alongside information collected from the Town and Parish Forum.

The Monitoring Officer advised that from his experience of working with the Code, largely at Town and Parish level, advised that a reversion to the style of code used by the pre-Localism Act 2011 National Model Code for Town and Parish Councillors may provide greater clarity. The Monitoring Officer noted that by applying this approach of the Nolan Principles, and retaining information from the former National Code that this would address any specific and common forms of code breach. The Monitoring Officer noted that by applying similar provisions to the 'personal interest' and 'personal prejudicial interest' formulae from the former National Code to deal with interests, which

were capable of impacting on a Councillors proper judgement when taking decisions would improve the current arrangements. The Monitoring Officer added that currently the Borough Council's Code of Conduct did not refer to such interests and was a shortcoming within its local arrangements.

The Monitoring officer advised that feedback from a recent Town and Parish Forum had highlighted concerns raised by Clerks, and in particularly the unacceptable conduct of some Councillors and the improper use of social media, which reflected a growing trend in code complaints about Councillors' misuse of social media.

The Committee considered what actions were needed for a revision of the Borough's Code of Conduct and welcomed the proposals of the Monitoring Officer. Members of the committee agreed that the use of e-media was a growing concern amongst Code complaints about Councillors, and welcomed a provision that specifically addressed this issue. The Chairman suggested that the Monitoring Officer looked at the Nottinghamshire County Code of Conduct which had recently been revised when preparing the Borough Councils draft revision of the Code.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the report be noted.
- b) revisions to the Code of conduct be drafted to cover the areas considered in the report, and others raised by the Committee, and that a revised draft Code be brought back to the Standards Committee for further consideration.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.

CHAIRMAN