

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2018**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area B, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road,
West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors J Wheeler (Chairman), S Bailey, R Inglis and S Mallender

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

G Norbury, K White and A Wood (Independent Members)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

T Coop

Constitutional Services Officer

S Sull

Monitoring Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors M Buckle and F Purdue-Horan

J Baggaley (Independent Person for Standards Matters)

5 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 July 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7 Cases and Work Update 2018 - 2019

The Monitoring Officer provided a report to update the committee on complaints received. The Monitoring Officer advised that there had been no further cases of complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Councillor's Code of Conduct since the last meeting on 2 July 2018.

The Monitoring Officer reported that since the last meeting, invitations had been sent to the Town and Parish Councils regarding receiving a presentation in respect of adopting a universal Code of Conduct, but advised that no responses had been received. The Monitoring Officer also advised that the training and development work reported at the last meeting would be scheduled as part of the induction training for all newly elected Councillors following the elections in May 2019.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

8 Revision to the Councillors' Code of Conduct

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report requesting that the committee consider potential amendments to the Borough Council's Code of Conduct, including the incorporation of a Social Media guide. The Monitoring Officer recommended that revisions to the Code of Conduct be drafted to incorporate these changes prior to being circulated to stakeholders for comment, with their responses reported back to the committee.

The Committee considered what was required within the Social Media guidance and what would be best practise with regard to adopting a universal guide to illustrate potential problems that could be encountered when using social media platforms. The Committee considered the potential dangers of using personal emails and social media pages and noted that engagement with the public should remain professional and positive when commenting on local issues that affected the communities in which they lived. The Committee agreed that Social Media, if used correctly and within specified guidelines was a positive form of communication, in particular in engaging with the younger and harder to engage with demographic audience. As part of the discussion Mrs K White circulated an illustrative example of what the guide could look like.

The Monitoring Officer thanked the committee for their comments and advised that she would be writing to the Town and Parish Councils to invite them to submit their comments in respect of Protocols around Social Media. A further draft for a Social Media guide would then be circulated at the next committee meeting for comment.

The Monitoring Officer invited the committee to comment on the current Councillors' Code of Conduct for Borough Councillor's and on what changes if any, that they would like to make to create a universal and more user friendly Code that could be adopted by Town and Parish Council's. The Committee established that the Code needed to be simplified and that the information contained within it needed to be clear and concise. Members of the Committee agreed that particular attention was required to ensure clarity on critically important areas such as recording Councillor's registration of interests and on the declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary Interests at meetings.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the draft social media guidelines be approved for circulation to the Town and Parish Council for comment and other stakeholders for comment.
- b) the draft revisions to the Code of Conduct be supported.

The meeting closed at 7.34 pm.

CHAIRMAN