

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 2 JULY 2018**

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

PRESENT:

Councillors J Wheeler (Chairman), M Buckle, R Inglis, S Mallender, F Purdue-Horan and Mrs J Smith

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

J Baggaley	Independent Person for Standards Matters
G Norbury	Independent Member
K White	Independent Member
A Wood	Independent Member

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

T Coop	Constitutional Services Officer
J Crowle	Monitoring Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillor S Bailey

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 April 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 30 April, 2018 were accepted as a true record.

Councillor Purdue-Horan requested that at future meetings if a member of the committee was joining the meeting on a conference call that this should be declared at the beginning of the meeting.

3 Cases and Work Update 2018 - 2019

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 30 April 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 the three cases had been complaints from two Borough Councillors about the actions of another Borough Councillor and one case from a member of the public about the actions of a Borough Councillor. The Monitoring Officer advised that of these cases had been rejected following the initial appraisal stage.

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

4 **Revisions to the Councillors' Code of Conduct**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report seeking the committee's thoughts and suggestions on proposed revisions to the Code of Conduct for Councillors and Co-opted Members. It was noted that following the recent review of, and changes to the Borough Council's Constitution and the previous Monitoring Officer's report to the last Standards Committee, it had agreed that revisions to the Councillors Code of Conduct be considered (Minute No.17 2017/18). The report of the Monitoring Officer sought to identify potential areas of addition and amendment to the current code, and in particular the disclosure of non-Pecuniary Interests and the adoption of the Nolan Principles.

The report included information and examples from other council's Codes of Conduct including Nottingham City Council, Gedling Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council and members of the committee considered whether any of the approaches and guidance offered by other councils could potentially be considered for inclusion in an amended Rushcliffe Borough Council Code of Conduct. The Committee also considered whether and to what extent, any additional guidelines relating to the handling of non-pecuniary interests might assist Town and Parish Councils who had already adopted the Borough Council's Code of Conduct and what effect the amendment to the Boroughs Code of conduct would have on them if changes were adopted at Town and Parish level. The Monitoring Officer provided a suggested list of key policies, protocols and procedure for the Committee to comment upon which were included as appendices to his report.

Members of the Committee agreed that there was scope for improvement in areas that were already included in the Code of Conduct that were currently included to add clarity and aid understanding and supported the list of key policies, protocols and procedures and the introduction of a social media protocol that had been suggested by the Monitoring Officer. Members also agreed that the Monitoring Officer should contact the Town and Parish Council Clerks to request information on their current Codes of Conduct and to enquire whether there was any interest in working together to adopt a universal Code of Conduct for all Town and Parish Councils, as well as Rushcliffe Borough Council. Members of the Committee enquired whether there was currently any protocol or guidance on the need to declare membership of Masonic Lodges, the Monitoring Officer advised that he was not aware of any, but that he would investigate this further.

Members of the Committee felt that it would be beneficial, particularly to new councillors, if the Code of Conduct were kept concise, clear and easy to understand and navigate. Members also felt that it might be helpful were the Code of Conduct to refer to other policies and protocols from other parts of the Council's Constitution.

Councillor Mallender commented that the Equality policy of the Council should be updated to include types of equality mentioned in the 2010 Equality Act that are not currently mentioned in the policy

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the report be noted.
- b) the list of proposed key policies, protocols and procedures, as detailed in the report of the Monitoring Officer be supported where relevant to the Council's activities.
- c) that the proposal for the introduction of a social media protocol be supported, and that the Monitoring Officer drafts a social media protocol for the committee's consideration.
- d) that the Monitoring Officer contacts Town and Parish Council Clerks to seek information on their current Codes of Conduct and to establish if there was interest the adoption of a universal Code of Conduct for all Town and Parish Councils, as well as Rushcliffe Borough Council.
- e) that the Monitoring Officer looks to investigate and establish if there are any examples the requirement for the declaration of membership of Masonic Lodges that could be considered for inclusion in a revised Code of Conduct.

ACTION SHEET – 2 July 2018

Minute No.	Action	Officer Responsible
4	That the Monitoring Officer drafts a social media protocol for the committee's consideration.	Monitoring Officer
4	That the Monitoring Officer contacts Town and Parish Council Clerks to seek information on their current Codes of Conduct and to establish if there was interest the adoption of a universal Code of Conduct for all Town and Parish Councils, as well as Rushcliffe Borough Council	Monitoring Officer
4	That the Monitoring Officer looks to investigate and establish if there are any examples the requirement for the declaration of membership of Masonic Lodges that could be considered for inclusion in a revised Code of Conduct.	Monitoring Officer

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm.

CHAIRMAN