



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 1 JULY 2019**

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

PRESENT:

Councillors S Bailey (Chairman), A Brennan, T Combellack, L Howitt and
S Mallender

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Sabina Nelkin, Kerry White and Allen Wood (Independent Members)
J Baggaley (Independent Person)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

T Coop
S Sull

Democratic Services Officer
Borough Solicitor

APOLOGIES:

Councillors N Clarke

1 Minutes of the Meeting held on

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2019 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

3 Cases and Work Update

The Monitoring Officer provided a report that updated the Committee on complaints received. Since the Committee's last meeting on 12 March 2019 three further complaints have been received regarding alleged breaches of the Councillor's Code of Conduct. One complaint had been reviewed by the Monitoring Officer, and no further action taken following initial assessment. One was at the initial assessment stage and the other was being referred for formal investigation by the Monitoring Officer giving due regard to the Councillor Complaint Procedure, and where appropriate the Independent Person had been consulted.

The Monitoring Officer reported that since the last meeting she had received one favourable response from the letter to Town and Parish Council's in respect of adopting a universal code of conduct.

In addition, the Monitoring Officer updated the Committee on the New

Councillor Induction Programme advising that the session on Standards was well attended.

Mrs Kerry White asked a specific question in relation to the Chief Executives Statement of Support which the Committee had endorsed at its last meeting, and whether there had been any noticeable change in the complaints being received. The Monitoring Officer advised that the arrangements were working well and she welcomed the support the Committee provided.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee note the report.

4 **Committee on Standards in Public Life and Revisions to Councillors Code of Conduct**

At its last meeting on 12 March 2019 the Committee were asked to consider the findings of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, review of Local Government Ethical Standards. The Monitoring Officer presented a report that updated Members on the resolutions made, in particular the revised documents to introduce best practise and recommendations set out in the Committee on Standards in Public Life Report. The Monitoring Officer had accordingly revised the code of conduct, Arrangements and draft criteria for assessment of complaints, the Public Interest Test and Social media Protocol of which copies were provided in an appendix to the report.

Members considered the documents and asked specific questions in respect of the Code of Conduct, and whether the changes were adequate and clear enough for Town and Parish Councils to adopt. The Monitoring Officer explained that the feedback she had received from Town and Parish councils was positive and that she was happy to work with them if and when problems arise. The Monitoring Officer added that the Code was a working document and further revision could be considered in future. Mr Baggarley, the independent person welcomed the extensive work the Monitoring Officer had done.

Members raised a number of concerns in relation to the Social Media Protocol and the negative tone in the language used. It was suggested that the document be presented in an alternative format, using colour and visuals to make it more user friendly and to encourage rather than discourage Councillors' in using Social Media.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The revision to the Councillor Code of Conduct and Arrangements be adopted by Council at its meeting on 18 July 2019.
- b) The best practise recommendations set out in the Committee on Standards in Public Life report be adopted by Council at its meeting on 18 July 2019.

5 **Exclusion of the Public**

It was **RESOLVED** that under section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as

defined in paragraph 1 of 1 of schedule 12A of the Act (amended).

6 **Standards Investigation Report**

The Committee considered Code of Conduct complaints against a Keyworth Parish Councillor, Anthony Grice.

The investigation was conducted in accordance with the Council's procedure for Standards Matters and the Independent Person was consulted at all stages of the process in accordance with the Council's arrangements.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) Councillor Grice had failed to comply with the Codes of Conduct in accordance with the Council's arrangements.
- b) The Committee noted the outcome of the investigation and the determination thereof by way of local resolution.
- c) Councillor Grice provided a written and minuted apology at the full Parish Council held on 11 March 2019.

The meeting closed at 7.48 pm.

CHAIRMAN