

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 27 JANUARY 2020**

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

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

S Nelkin and K White (Independent Member)
J Baggaley (Independent Person for Standards Matters)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

T Coop Democratic Services Officer
S Sull Monitoring Officer

APOLOGIES:

A Wood (Independent Member)

10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

11 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 September 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2019 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Actions and Responses – Standards Committee on 23 September 2019

Minute No.	Action	Response
9	Members of the Committee requested that improvements are made to the search engine in respect of access to the standards complaint form on the website.	The Monitoring Officer advised that a test was completed on the Councils website and a test form was submitted and received in the Monitoring Officers emails. A test was also completed by Kerry White (Independent Member) using an external search engine. It was confirmed that the form was accessible.
9	Members were also concerned at the language used in some	The Monitoring Officer advised that the Council had approved

	the Best Practice Principles and asked if this could be altered to reflect the Borough practice.	the adoption of the Best Practice Principles at its meeting in July 2019. The Committee were advised that the principles could form part of the Committees work programme should they wish to make any alterations. However the advise from the CSPL was that they be adopted wholesale.
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12 **Cases and Work Update**

Cases Update

The Monitoring Officer provided a report that updated the Committee on complaints received since the implementation of the existing Standards regime. Since the Committees last meeting on 23 September 2019 one complaint has been received regarding an alleged breach of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer advised that this complaint is currently on hold pending further information. The complainant has responded to the Monitoring Officers request for more information and the complaint is being reviewed by the Monitoring Officer. The Independent Person has not been consulted at this stage in the investigation.

The Committee asked specific questions in relation to the reporting of complaints to Standards Committee and requested that more information on the nature of a complaint be provided for the Committee to consider, adding that this information would help the Committee to decide whether specific training was required for Councillors’. The Committee suggested that going forward the Monitoring Officer provides information on the nature of complaints from May 2019 onwards. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that a column had been added to the complaints table ‘nature of complaint’ so that this information was available in her report and going forward.

John Baggaley – Independent Person strongly advised that care is needed if the committee is insisting on naming the subject member, as this could be seen as pre-determination should the case go to a Standards Hearing.

The Monitoring Officer agreed to provide information in respect of the nature of retrospective complaints from the start of the Municipal year, May 2019.

Best Practice Principles

The Committee were asked to consider the Best Practice Principles with a view to recommending a Work Programme for their implementation. The Monitoring Officer provided a table as an appendix to the report, which confirmed the principles already adopted by the Council and those principles not yet adopted. In addition, the Monitoring Officer highlighted the principles that were currently under review, and explained she was liaising with her counterparts at neighbouring authorities. The Monitoring Officer advised that the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL), will review implementation of the principles by authorities by March 2020.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The report be noted.
- b) The Committee agreed the implementation work programme of the Best Practice Principles.

13 **Councillor Attendance at Meetings**

A letter from the Chief Executive, addressed to the Standards Committee Chairman, was presented for the Committee to consider whether the suspension of the payment of allowances under the Councillors' Allowance scheme should be made for nonattendance of a Councillors at meetings.

The letter referred to Councillor Beardsall and Councillor Murray who have not attended a formal Council meeting for a period of three months. The Chief Executive has been informed of their reasons for nonattendance and in the case of Councillor Beardsall this is to remain private and confidential.

The Committee accepted the reasons for Councillor Murray's non-attendance and agreed that her allowances under the Councillors' Allowance Scheme should continue to be paid.

The Committee considered that the reasons for Councillor Beardsall's nonattendance was not explained to allow them to determine the reasonableness of continuation of his allowance. The Committee were mindful of transparency and scrutiny of decisions they make.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee approved the continuation of allowances under the Councillors' Allowance scheme for Councillor Murray.
- b) The Committee refused the continuation of allowances under the Councillors' Allowance scheme for Councillor Beardsall.

The meeting closed at 8.04 pm.

CHAIRMAN