

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held on 15 October 2025 at 5.15 pm

**Present**

**Councillors:**

E Buczkowski (Chair), G Duchesne (Vice Chair), F J Colthorpe, G Czapiewski, M Stratton, and L Taylor.

**Apologies**

**Councillors:**

M Fletcher (online), N Woollatt and D Wulff (online).

**Also Present**

**Officers:**

Maria De Leburne (Director of Legal, People & Governance (Monitoring Officer)) and Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager)

**Councillors**

J Buczkowski.

**Online:**

17 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00:04:01)**

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Apologies were received from Councillors: M Fletcher (online), N Woollatt and D Wulff (online).

18 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00:04:18)**

None received.

19 **MINUTES (00:04:29)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 June 2025 were **APPROVED** as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00:04:45)**

No interests were declared under this item.

21 **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (05:00:00)**

The Chair had no announcements to make.

22 **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION FOLLOWING MOTIONS APPROVED BY COUNCIL (05:11:00)**

The Committee **NOTED** the amendments to the constitution following motions approved by Council.

**23 UPDATE FROM THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION (05:31:00)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED**, a verbal update from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) on the Government consultations. There was no response yet to the consultation on 'Strengthening the Standards and Code of Conduct for Local Authorities in England'. The Council were awaiting further legislation/guidance from Government in relation to remote attendance and proxy voting and this would be brought back to the Committee in due course.

**24 REGISTER OF INTEREST UPDATE (00:06:15)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED**, a verbal update from the Democratic Services Manager on how Councillors Register of Interest Forms would be displayed on the Council's website and that in the future Members would make their own changes. A training session would be provided to all Members before this went live.

**25 ACCESS TO INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (00:10:25)**

The Chair stated that the Committee would remain in open session.

**26 COMPLAINTS (00:11:19)**

The Committee **NOTED** a verbal update from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) which provided an update on complaints received.

The following was highlighted:

- The reference number 2025/2 was outstanding from the last meeting. This decision was not upheld.
- The reference numbers 2025/5 and 2025/6-7 were outstanding from the last meeting, all 3 complaints were upheld, and the decisions had now been issued.
- The decisions on these 3 complaints were an informal resolution to request an apology and a review of the Code of Conduct. Also, a reminder regarding appropriate communication.
- There had been 6 new complaints that had been received to date, 5 decisions had been drafted and 1 was still outstanding for decision.
- Further information had been provided in more detail with regard to the types of complaints that had been made including if they had been upheld or not.
- The themes were disrespect, non-declaration of interest and bullying and intimidation at meetings.

The following was discussed:

- The concerns about the informal resolution if the Councillors were to refuse to comply with the outcome. What enforcements powers would the Council have

to ensure this was done? – It was explained that the current legalisation had no grounds to enforce. The Monitoring Officer could only request that the informal resolution was completed and where relevant does liaise with the relevant Clerk of the Town or Parish Council about the matter.

- The Committee was not aware whether any of the complaints were repeat offenders.
- The outcomes of the decisions and if they had been completed. – It was explained that the Monitoring Officer would issue the decision and then it would be for the Town or Parish Clerk to act i.e. arrange code of conduct training where it has been suggested. The Monitoring Officer advised that she could contact the Clerk regarding the decision to find out the outcome or next steps and feed back to the Committee, however, this may not be the case for all complaints.
- Were there any plans within the Government for changes to take place for councils to have the powers to enforce the recommendations– It was explained that the Council had submitted their responses in relation to ‘Strengthening the Standards and Conduct framework for Local Authorities in England’ and were awaiting the consultation outcome and further guidance on how this would be embedded in due course within this Council.
- Clarification about hearings and suspension. It was explained that within our Constitution, page 282 under the sanction section, it referenced what the Council had the powers to do.
- The understanding of the complexity of the complaints and to be reassured that the processes were being followed.
- With the repeat offenders would this change the approach and severity? - It was explained that each application would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis individually and whether there was a breach.
- Was the Monitoring Officer providing support to the Town and Parish Clerks? – It was explained that the Monitoring Officer often gave advice to Clerks.
- Should Councillors get involved with the Town and Parish Clerks on these matters? – It was explained that they should not get involved and should let the Monitoring Officer deal with the complaints.

## 27 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (00:30:35)

The following items were identified for the next meeting of the Committee:

- The Terms of Reference Report from the Working Group.
- A report on the complaint process post Local Government Reorganisation to a future meeting.
- Disclosure Barring System update
- Annual Report from the Monitoring Officer.

The Committee **NOTED** that that clerk would arrange a training session for all Members on the Councils Standards Code of Conduct.

(The meeting ended at 17.50pm)

**CHAIR**