

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
9 OCTOBER 2019**

REPORT OF THE STANDARDS WORKING GROUP

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Nikki Woollatt, Cabinet Member for the Working Environment and Support Services

Responsible Officer: Kathryn Tebbey, Group Manager for Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Reason for Report: to update members on the Standards Working Group's consideration of the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life issued in January 2019.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1 that the recommendations of the Standards Working Group be agreed and the action taken to date be noted.**
- 2 the Council be recommended to approve the consequential revisions to the Code of Conduct set out in part 3 of this report and then to adopt the revised Code.**

Financial Implications: Depending on the outcome on the proposed indemnity for the Independent Person, there may be a financial implication in covering the cost of such indemnity. That is not yet known as further discussions need to take place.

Legal Implications: These are set out in this report where appropriate.

Risk Assessment: Not keeping up to date with best practice in ethical standards.

Equality Impact Assessment: None directly arising from this report.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Member development; working with town and parish councils.

Impact on Climate Change: None directly arising from this report.

1.0 Introduction/Background

1.1 On 29 July 2019, the Standards Working Group met to consider the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life which was published in January 2019. The Working Group looked at those recommendations that might be actioned in advance of the Government's response and the advice on best practice. The minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix 3.

1.2 The Monitoring Officer and two Deputy Monitoring Officers have worked through the recommendations made by the Working Group. The actions taken to date are set out in the table below. The Monitoring Officer can advise Members in the meeting of any further developments since the drafting of this report.

2.0 Recommendations made and action taken

- 2.1 Table 1 at Appendix 1 is taken from the minutes of the Working Group meeting and expanded to include a column of action taken following the meeting. The number and recommendation columns are a reference to the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Members therefore need to have access to their agenda papers from 19 June 2019, as this included the relevant report.
- 2.2 Table 2 at Appendix 1 shows the Working Group's consideration of the best practice put forward in the report – again the numbers and best practice are those taken from the report to which members should refer.

3.0 Consequential changes to the Code of Conduct

- 3.1 The Standards Working Group has recommended changes to the Code of Conduct by including harassment as an unacceptable behaviour, together with general definitions for bullying and harassment. Examples of such behaviour are not necessarily helpful – inevitably this is fact specific in any case. The revised Code of Conduct in draft form is appended at Appendix 2.
- 3.2 If the Standards Committee is happy with the draft revisions to the Code, it will need to recommend to Council that they be approved and that the Code be adopted.

Contact for more Information: Kathryn Tebbey, Group Manager for Legal Services and Monitoring Officer, (01884) 234210 ktebbey@middevon.gov.uk

Circulation of the Report: Cabinet Member seen and approved [yes/no – name of Cabinet Member], Leadership Team seen and approved [yes/no]

List of Background Papers:

Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, January 2019.
Minutes of Standards Committee 19 June 2019
Constitution of Mid Devon District Council