



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **WEDNESDAY 4 JULY 2018 AT 7.00 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manjeet Gill'.

Manjeet Gill  
Interim Chief Executive  
Published on 26 June 2018

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# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Our Vision**

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

## **Our Priorities**

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

## **The Underpinning Principles**

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### Councillors

Ken Miall (Chairman)

Richard Dolinski (Vice-Chairman)

Parry Batth

UllaKarin Clark

Dianne King

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

### Parish/Town Council Representatives

Sally Gurney

Co-Optee, Wokingham Town Council

Roy Mantel

Co-Optee Twyford Parish Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
3.		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence	
4.		<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To confirm the Minutes of the Meetings held on 8 March and 13 June 2018.	5 - 8
5.		<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest.	
6.		<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any public questions.  A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice.  The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee.  Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a>	
7.		<b>MEMBER QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any Member questions.	
8.		<b>PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL QUESTION TIME</b> To answer any questions from Parish / Town Councillors.	
9.	All Wards	<b>UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK</b> To consider an update on Code of Conduct complaints since the last meeting and any related feedback.	9 - 14

**Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent.**

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 8 MARCH 2018 FROM 7.00 PM TO 7.45 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

Councillors: UllaKarin Clark (Chairman), Ken Miall (Vice-Chairman), Pauline Helliarsymons and Paul Swaddle

Parish/Town Council Representatives:- Sally Gurney (Co-Optee, Wokingham Town Council) and Roy Mantel (Co-Optee Twyford Parish Council)

**Other Councillors Present**

Councillors: Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

**Officers Present**

Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer

Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

**17. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Prue Bray.

**18. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**19. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**20. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

**21. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

**22. PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL QUESTION TIME**

There were no Parish/Town Council questions.

**23. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 7 to 14, which gave details of a review of local government ethical standards being undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The consultation covered a range of issues including Member Codes of Conduct, governance arrangements for dealing with complaints and the effectiveness of sanctions.

Members considered consultation questions relating to the following specific issues:

- Effectiveness of existing structures, processes and practices;
- Any significant gaps in the current ethical standards regime;
- Effectiveness of Codes of Conduct;
- Investigations and decisions on allegations;

- Effectiveness of the current sanctions regime;
- Declaration of interests and conflicts of interest;
- Effectiveness of whistleblowing arrangements;
- Potential steps to improve ethical standards;
- Intimidation of local Councillors.

The Committee commented on each of the issues and agreed that Andrew Moulton (Assistant Director, Governance) respond on behalf of the Committee after consultation with the Chairman. Members also felt that the consultation response should be shared with the Group Leaders and that individual Members be notified that they could submit their own response.

**RESOLVED** That:

- 1) the Committee's response to the consultation on ethical standards in local government be completed by the Assistant Director, Governance in consultation with the Chairman;
- 2) the draft consultation response be shared with the Group Leaders for information;
- 3) all Members be informed that they are able to submit individual consultation responses.

#### **24. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee considered the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2017/18, set out at Agenda pages 15 to 20.

The Annual Report gave details of the work of the Committee over the previous year and highlighted any significant issues and trends. The report noted a significant reduction in Code of Conduct complaints activity during 2017/18.

The Annual Report would be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 22 March 2018.

**RESOLVED:** That the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2017/18 be approved for submission to the Council.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 13 JUNE 2018 FROM 6.00 PM TO 6.05 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

Councillors: Parry Batth, UllaKarin Clark, Dianne King, Ken Miall and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

**Officers Present**

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee elected a Chairman for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED:** That Ken Miall be elected as Chairman of the Standards Committee for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

The Committee appointed a Vice-Chairman for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED:** That Richard Dolinski be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

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# Agenda Item 9.

**TITLE** Update on Complaints and Feedback

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY** Standards Committee on 4 July 2018

**WARD** (All Wards);

**DIRECTOR** Director of Corporate Services - Graham Ebers

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

To inform and feedback results of the Member Complaints process.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

To note the report and consider any issues arising.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Since the last report on Complaints to the Committee on 18 January 2018 there has been one new complaint received.

Appendix A provides a summary of the complaint.

A verbal update will be given at the meeting on any specific patterns/trends or other matters that the Committee may need to consider.

Also, the Committee is asked to consider any broader training issues that arise from these and previous complaints.



## Background

Under Section 9.1.13.5 of the Council's Constitution, the Monitoring Officer provides a report to the Standards Committee, on a quarterly basis, which contains the following: the number and nature of complaints received; progress on any investigations and associated costs; and identify areas where training or other action might avoid further complaints. However, the name(s) of the Member(s) will not be disclosed.

Since the last report to the Committee on 18 January 2018, there has been one new Code of Conduct complaint received.

Under the Council's adopted policy for the consideration of Code of Conduct Complaints, the Monitoring has delegated authority to decide whether the complaint:

- a) can be resolved informally i.e. by mediation with the two parties before making a decision on whether the complaint merits formal investigation;
- b) requires investigation;
- c) should be referred to the Standards Committee;
- d) no further action should be taken.

## Analysis of Issues

The outcomes of the complaint is shown at Appendix A.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b> (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)
The work and conduct of Councillors can impact all aspects of the Council's services.

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>
Not applicable

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
None

<b>Contact</b> Andrew Moulton	<b>Service</b> Governance
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**Appendix A - Code of Conduct Complaints – Outcome of Complaints**

**New complaints since 18 January 2018**

<b>Date Received</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Summary of Complaint</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Date Concluded</b>
18/3/18	WBC	<p>This complaint was received from a Member and related to the alleged conduct of another Member in the lead up to, and immediately before, a public meeting in March.</p> <p>An independent investigation was conducted which found no evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct.</p>	No further action	20/6/18

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