



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **MONDAY 7 JANUARY 2019 AT 7.00 PM**

Heather Thwaites

Heather Thwaites
Interim Chief Executive
Published on 30 December 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)
Dianne King

Parry Batth
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

UllaKarin Clark

Parish/Town Council Representatives

Sally Gurney
Roy Mantel

Co-Optee, Wokingham Town Council
Co-Optee Twyford Parish Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
17.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence	
18.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest	
19.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 October 2018.	5 - 6
20.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME 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 www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
21.		MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any Member questions.	
22.		PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL QUESTION TIME To answer any questions from Parish / Town Councillors.	
23.		UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK To consider an update on Code of Conduct Complaints and any matters arising.	7 - 12

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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Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2018 FROM 7.30 PM TO 7.40 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Ken Miall (Chairman), Parry Batth, Dianne King and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Town and Parish Councillors Present

Councillors: Sally Gurney and Roy Mantel

Officers Present

Andrew Moulton, Monitoring Officer
Mary Severin, Deputy Monitoring Officer
Jennifer Lee, Senior Solicitor
Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

10. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from UllaKarin Clark and Richard Dolinski.

Paddy Haycocks (Independent Person) was also in attendance.

11. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

14. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

15. PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from Parish or Town Councillors.

16. UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 7 to 12, which provided an update on new Code of Conduct complaints reported since the previous meeting of the Committee on 4 July 2018.

The report stated that five new complaints had been received in that period. Appendix A to the report provided a summary of the complaints. The complaints related to a range of issues including Member conduct at public meetings, comments on social media and a planning matter.

The report also gave details of the powers available to the Monitoring Officer to investigate and resolve complaints. Under the Council's Constitution the Monitoring Officer had delegated authority to decide whether complaints:

- a) Could be resolved informally, e.g. by mediation;
- b) Required investigation;
- c) Should be referred to the Standards Committee;
- d) Did not require any further action to be taken.

Andrew Moulton, Monitoring Officer, confirmed that more detailed feedback would be provided to complainants and other interested parties in cases where no further action was to be taken.

The Committee considered any trends amongst the complaints and any training and/or communication issues arising. Members also considered any matters arising from the Member training session held before the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update report on complaints and feedback on Code of Conduct issues be noted.

Agenda Item 23.

TITLE Update on Complaints and Feedback

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Standards Committee on 7 January 2019

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 15 October 2018 there have been no new complaints received.

Appendix A provides a summary of the complaints previously received and the latest position on each.

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 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 15 October 2018, there have been no new Code of Conduct complaints 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:

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

Analysis of Issues

The latest position on existing complaints 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

Cross-Council Implications (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.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
Not applicable

List of Background Papers
None

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Appendix A - Code of Conduct Complaints – Outcome of Complaints

Complaints Update (since 15 October 2018)

Date Received	Council	Summary of Complaint	Progress/Conclusion	Date Concluded
12/8/18	WBC	Relates to conduct and behavior at a public meeting and actions surrounding support for a resident.	Allegations are subject to investigation. The subject member has been interviewed and other witnesses including the complainant scheduled for interview.	Ongoing
12/8/18	WBC	Relates to conduct and behavior at a public meeting.	Allegations are subject to investigation. The subject member has been interviewed and other witnesses including the complainant scheduled for interview.	Ongoing
22/8/18	WTC	Relates to a posting on social media.	Further information was sought from complainant following meeting with Chairman of Standards Committee and Independent Person. Following careful consideration, it was agreed that there had been no breach of the Code.	15/11/18

23/8/18	WTC	Relates to above complaint alleging that complaint is malicious.	The complainant agreed to withdraw this complaint.	15/11/18
31/8/18	WBC	Relates to a planning matter.	Following meeting with Chairman of Standards Committee and Independent Person it was agreed that there had been no breach of the Code of Conduct. A verbal update will be provided to the Committee about additional guidance that may be helpful specifically for Members of the Planning Committee.	22/11/18

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Key:

WBC = Wokingham Borough Council

WTC = Wokingham Town Council