

**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.