

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2021 FROM 7.30 PM TO 7.55 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: John Halsall (Chairman), John Kaiser (Vice-Chairman), Prue Bray, Gary Cowan, Graham Howe, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey and Wayne Smith

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

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Officer
Jennifer Lee, Deputy Monitoring Officer
Andrew Moulton, Monitoring Officer

36. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

37. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

Note: Prue Bray expressed concern that the meeting had originally been arranged for 7pm (as set out in the Agenda) but had subsequently been rearranged to commence at 7.30pm.

38. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited members of the public to submit questions.

39.1 Philip Meadowcroft asked the following question of the Chairman:

What arrangements are in place for Councillors to be trained in fulfilling their duties and understanding the various protocols in the Borough's Constitution where they apply to the conduct of Councillors?

Answer

The Standards Committee aims to achieve the highest ethical standards in line with the seven principles of public life. Newly elected Councillors receive induction training which outlines the standards of behaviour required and the importance of establishing and maintaining the trust of residents. The training also covers areas such as the declaration of personal and prejudicial interests, access to information and the Member/Officer protocol. Supplementary guidance is also provided on common issues which arise through the investigation of complaints. As an example, the development of guidance on the use and misuse of social media is currently under consideration.

Supplementary Question

In my question I referred to the protocols in place. Please can you guide me through Paragraph 9.1.1 a) of the Constitution?

Supplementary Answer

I will have to provide you with a written answer.

Note: Prue Bray expressed concern as she did not believe that the question had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting, nor was it available for public inspection.

40. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

41. PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from Town or Parish Council Members.

42. CONSULTATION ON THE WBC CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 7 to 22, which gave details of a public consultation on proposed changes to the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

At this point (7.50pm) Imogen Shepherd-Dubey raised a point of order in relation to the Committee's composition and the implications of Paragraph 9.1.1 of the Council's Constitution (as referenced in the public question from Philip Meadowcroft).

On the advice of the Monitoring Officer, the meeting ended in order to allow further consideration of the Constitutional issue raised.

43. UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

This item was not considered.