

**Standards Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Monday 18 January 2021**  
**at 10.00am**

**Present:**

Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris (in the Chair)  
Cllr Claire Bowes  
Cllr Dan Roper

Cllr John Ward  
Cllr Tony White (Vice-Chairman)

**Independent Members Present:**

Mr A Squirrell  
Mr S Jones

**Also in Attendance:**

Helen Edwards - Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

**1. Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Sarah Butikofer (Cllr Dan Roper Substituted) and Cllr George Nobbs.

**2. Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 There were no interests declared.

**4. Urgent Business**

- 4.1 There was no urgent business to consider.

The Committee **agreed** to consider agenda item 6 (Performance and Monitoring Report) as its next item of business followed by item 7 (Appointment of Independent Persons).

**5. Performance and Monitoring Report**

- 5.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer updating it on matters of standards and conduct since the last meeting.
- 5.2 In introducing the report, the Director of Governance & Monitoring Officer

drew the Committee's attention to the following:

- The report covered the period from 11 July 2020 to 31 December 2020.
- Only one complaint had been received during the period, from a member of the public. There was no allegation that a specific paragraph of the code had been broken, but from the nature of the complaint it potentially fell into the category of a failure to treat with respect. The issue was complicated because comments were reported in the Eastern Daily Press, but on balance, and after discussions with the Independent Persons, it was felt that, although the EDP probably only interviewed the councillor because he was a councillor, his comments were made in his private capacity and not as a Councillor and therefore no further action was taken.

5.3 The Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to **note** the Council's performance in relation to Member standards and conduct during the period 11 July 2020 to 31 December 2020.

## **6. Appointment of Independent Persons**

6.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer which updated them on the situation for the recruitment of the independent persons.

6.2 If for any reason the AGM did not take place in May, then the Committee would have to discuss again the recruitment of the Independent Persons.

6.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;

1. Extend the appointment of the current two independent persons until the end of April 2021 to allow for a recruitment process to take place early in 2021
2. Ask Officers to proceed with the recruitment process to appoint two new independent persons for a period of 4 years as from May 2021.

## **7. Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020**

7.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer which set out the proposed Councillor Code of Conduct from the Local Government Association.

7.2 The Director of Governance & Monitoring Officer introduced the report during which the following point was noted:

In appendix C of the report it referred to recommendations by the Committee on Standards and Public Life. The Local Government Association had clearly stated that if Government intended to implement any of those recommendations, it would require a change of primary legislation. Government had not introduced any legislation, probably due to the pressures of the pandemic, and as a result there had been no changes to the primary legislation. Therefore, the Director reported that some Local Authorities intended not to change their Code immediately and would wait

to see if the Government intended to introduce further legislation. There were also conversations happening about what best practice would look like and there was a general feeling nationwide that it could be too early to introduce this Code of Conduct.

- 7.3 There were no significant risks to the Council if the model Code of Conduct was not adopted and they remained with the current code until more information was announced from Government. The current code can be unclear at times and there is no definition of bullying, but it had worked reasonably well for the Council.
- 7.4 There were concerns raised about the proposed model code. The code references being banned from meetings if you declare an 'other' interest, which wasn't the case currently. There were also aspects of the code which needed amendment such as references to an appendix which didn't exist. However, it was felt that the model Code was well laid out and covered points that were not covered in the current code.
- 7.5 If adopted, the Code would be discussed at Council on 19 April 2021 when the completed review of the Constitution would be discussed.
- 7.6 The Committee considered the Model Councillor Code and Conduct from the Local Government Association and **RESOLVED**;
1. To recommend to Council that the code be adopted with the local amendments as follows;
    - To remove paragraph 6,7,8,9, 10 and table 2, and to remove any reference to unpaid directorship.
  2. That the Chair, vice-Chair and the Monitoring Officer look at the impact of adopting the model code of conduct on the appendices of the Constitution.

The meeting finished at 10.25am

**Mark Kiddle-Morris**  
**Chairman**