



St. Helens Council

TO: Standards Committee

Democratic Services

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Our Ref: JG/
Your Ref:

28 June 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 1 JULY 2019

Please find attached the undermentioned item which was marked “To Follow” on the Agenda for the above meeting.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
7	Update on Review of Code of Conduct for Elected Members/ Planning Protocol/Member/Officer Relations Protocol	3

Yours faithfully,

Joanne L Griffiths

Joanne Griffiths MBE
Democratic Services Manager

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Standards Committee
1 July 2019

**REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED & CO-OPTED MEMBERS,
PLANNING PROTOCOL AND PROTOCOL ON MEMBER / OFFICER RELATIONS**

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on the progress of the review of the following documents and proposed changes agreed by Standards Committee on 2 April 2019:

- Code of Conduct for Elected & Co-Opted Members
- Protocol for Councillors and Officers dealing with Planning Matters (Planning Protocol)
- Protocol on Member / Officer Relations

2. Background

- 2.1 Robust standards arrangements are necessary to safeguard local democracy, maintain high standards of conduct, and to protect ethical practice in local government.
- 2.2 At the Standards Committee on 14 January 2019, members were informed that a review of these important documents was underway to ensure they remain up-to-date and fit for purpose. The report indicated the proposed amendments to the documents arising from the review would be reported to members of the Standards Committee in due course for consideration.
- 2.3 All elected members were invited to attend Ethical Standards & Code of Conduct training in October 2018. The review process was instigated following this training. A number of issues were highlighted during the training which have been considered and addressed as part of the review, along with other changes which are considered to be appropriate to include. Newly elected members have all received training on the Code of Conduct for Elected & Co-Opted Members and these related documents as part of their induction process.
- 2.4 At the last Standards Committee on 2 April 2019, members considered a detailed report on the proposed changes to each of the documents. Standards Committee agreed the proposed changes and agreed to recommend them to Council for adoption, as an amendment to Part 5 of the Constitution.
- 2.5 At the meeting of Annual Council on 22 May 2019, members will recall it was agreed to defer the report on the proposed changes to a future meeting of Council to enable new members and new political groups to consider it.

3. The Review

- 3.1 The review was supported by David McGrath of Link Support Services, who delivered the training to members in October 2018. He has reviewed the

Council's current documents and benchmarked them against other local authorities.

- 3.2 The best practice recommendations set out in the recent Committee on Standards in Public Life ("CSPL") Review report have informed the review. Standards Committee considered a report on the CSPL recommendations at its meeting on 2 April 2019.
- 3.3 In order to enable new members and new political groups to consider the proposed changes, it is recommended a cross-party working group is formed from the membership of Standards Committee, including a representative from each political group to meet in July 2019. A further update will be provided to members of the Standards Committee on the outcome of the considerations of the Working Group with a view to the proposals being recommended to Council for adoption in due course.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee is invited to nominate members from Standards Committee to form a cross-party working group, including a representative from each political group, to meet in July 2019 to consider the proposed changes to the following documents with a further update provided to Standards Committee in due course:

- Code of Conduct for Elected & Co-Opted Members
- Protocol for Councillors and Officers dealing with Planning Matters (Planning Protocol)
- Protocol on Member / Officer Relations

Jan Bakewell

Deputy Director, Legal & Governance

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