

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of this Committee held on
2 April 2019

(Present) **Councillor Roberts (Chairman)**
Councillors Deakin, J Jackson, P Jackson, Jones, Maloney MBE,
Murphy and Sims

(Not Present) **Councillors De'Asha and J Johnson**

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors De'Asha and J Johnson.

18 MINUTES

* **Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2019 be approved and signed.**

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

No Declarations of Interest from Members were made.

20 COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE REPORT - REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS

A report was submitted which informed the Committee of the findings in the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life ("CSPL") following its review of local government ethical standards.

At the last Standards Committee held on 14 January 2019, Members were provided with an update on the progress of the CSPL review and informed the outcome and recommendations would be reported to Standards Committee in due course.

The CSPL issued its report on 30 January 2019, which was shared with all Members by an email from the Monitoring Officer on the same date. The report was also shared with Parish Council clerks for information. A copy of the CSPL report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The CSPL advises the Prime Minister on ethical standards across the whole of public life in England. It monitors and reports on issues relating to the standards of conduct of all public office holders. CSPL is an independent advisory non-departmental public body. It is responsible for promoting the Seven Principles of Public Life.

In addition to the recommendations detailed in the report, the Review identified a list of best practice recommendations for local authorities to consider to improve ethical standards. The CSPL indicated they would review the implementation of their best practice in 2020.

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Members raised questions regarding the recommendations in the report which were answered at the meeting.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the report and the contents of the CSPL Review be noted; and**
- (2) **the actions contained within section 6 in relation to best practice recommendations be endorsed in order to strengthen and clarify the Council's existing Code of Conduct for Elected & Co-opted Members.**

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

A report was submitted which informed the Committee of the outcome of a review of the following documents and sought the views of the Committee on the proposed changes with a view to them being recommended for adoption by Annual Council on 22 May 2019:

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

Robust standards arrangements were necessary to safeguard local democracy, maintain high standards of conduct, and to protect ethical practice in local government.

At the last Standards Committee held 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.

Proposed changes to these documents required the approval of full Council to adopt them, as an amendment to Part 5 of the Constitution. The intention was to provide a report with the recommended changes at Annual Council on 22 May 2019.

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 had been considered and addressed as part of the review, along with other changes which were considered to be appropriate to include.

Members raised questions regarding the recommendations in the report which were answered at the meeting.

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* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the proposed changes to the following documents be agreed:**
 - a) Code of Conduct for Elected & Co-Opted Members;**
 - b) Protocol for Councillors and Officers dealing with Planning Matters (Planning Protocol);**
 - c) Protocol on Member / Officer Relations; and**

- (2) Council be recommended to adopt the documents at the Annual Meeting to be held on 22 May 2019.**

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