

**Standards Committee**

**Date:** Monday, 20 September 2021

**Time:** 09:30

**Venue:** Council Chamber

**Chair:** Councillor Mrs Marilyn Bowman

**Present:** Councillor Trevor Allison, Councillor Mrs Marilyn Bowman, Councillor Keith Meller, Councillor David Morton (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Mallinson), Councillor Christopher Southward (as substitute for Councillor Ms Ellis-Williams), Councillor Dr Les Tickner.

**Also Present:** Mr Keith Thomas, Independent Person

**Officers:** Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Investigating Officer

**ST.07/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jeffery Bomford, Councillor Ms Jo Ellis-Williams and Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Mallinson.

**ST.08/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

**ST.09/21 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Legal Services Manager reported that there had been a request submitted to move agenda items B.1 to B.5 into public. The reports had been exempt from public circulation because the information in the reports related to an individual. She explained that the reports could be moved, if Members so wished, if they believed it was in the public interest to do so.

RESOLVED – It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private

**ST.10/21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED – It was noted that Council, at its meeting on 20 July 2021, received and adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2021. The Chair signed the minutes.

**ST.11/21 CODE OF CONDUCT ANNUAL REPORT**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the Code of Conduct Annual Report (GD.61/21).

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that in accordance with the arrangements for dealing with such matters, the report provided an update about complaints which had resulted in a decision that no further action be taken. Between July 2020 and September 2021 there had been three investigations into complaints made against Parish Councillors and five complaints regarding City Councillors which were deemed not to meet the threshold to warrant a formal investigation.

RESOLVED – That the Code of Conduct Annual Report (GD.61/21) be noted.

**ST.12/21 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED – That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph number (as indicated in brackets against the minute) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act.

**ST.13/21 ALLEGATION THAT AN ELECTED MEMBER HAS BREACHED THE CODE OF CONDUCT (1)**  
(Public and Press Paragraph 1)

Also Present – Elected Member  
Elected Member's Representative

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented report GD.62/21 regarding an allegation that an Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Investigating Officer presented his finding and responded to questions from the Committee.

The Elected Member's Representative addressed the Committee on behalf of the Elected Member.

The Elected Member's Representative responded to questions from the Committee.

The Investigating Officer and the Elected Member's Representative each summed up.

The Investigating Officer, Elected Member and Elected Member's Representative withdrew from the meeting whilst the Committee gave detailed consideration to the matter. The respective parties returned, and it was:

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee had considered the evidence set out in report GD.62/21 and listened to the submission made by the Elected Member's Representative.

The Standards Committee agreed that the Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct by failing to treat another with respect and failing to promote high standards of conduct.

The Standards Committee considered the sanctions available to them and agreed the following sanctions for the Elected Member:

That a formal letter be sent to the Elected Member  
That the Standards Committee report its findings in public to the Council

*The meeting adjourned at 10.26am and reconvened at 10.30am.*

**ST.14/21 ALLEGATION THAT AN ELECTED MEMBER HAS BREACHED THE CODE OF CONDUCT (2)**  
(Public and Press Paragraph 1)

Also Present – Complainant  
Complainant's Representative  
Former Elected Member

## Former Elected Member's Representative

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented report GD.63/21 regarding an allegation that a former Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Investigating Officer presented his finding and responded to questions from the Committee.

The Former Elected Member addressed the Committee.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer clarified that the complaint had been made against a former Elected Member, therefore the Committee was not asked to determine whether there had been a breach of the Code of Conduct nor to apply any sanctions. The Committee was asked to consider the Investigating Officer's report and make findings of fact only.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer also clarified that the Investigating Officer and the Chair of the Standards Committee had felt that the evidence provided within the reports was sufficient for the Committee to reach its decision, therefore no witnesses had been called to attend the meeting.

The Former Elected Member responded to questions from the Investigating Officer, the Complainant's Representative, and the Committee

The Investigating Officer and the Former Elected Member each summed up.

The Investigating Officer, Complainant, Complainant's Representative, Former Elected Member and Former Elected Member's Representative withdrew from the meeting whilst the Committee gave detailed consideration to the matter. The respective parties returned, and it was:

**RESOLVED** – That the Standards Committee had considered the evidence set out in report GD.63/21 and listened to the submission made by the Former Elected Member.

The Standards Committee agreed the findings of fact as set out in 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of report GD.63/21.

### **ST.15/21 ALLEGATION THAT AN ELECTED MEMBER HAS BREACHED THE CODE OF CONDUCT (3)** (Public and Press Paragraph 1)

Also Present – Complainant  
Complainant's Representative  
Elected Member  
Elected Member's Representative

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented report GD.64/21 regarding an allegation that an Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Investigating Officer presented his finding.

The Complainant addressed the Committee.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided legal advice regarding the relevant legislation and case law which the Committee must take into account.

The Complainant responded to questions from the Elected Member's Representative and Investigating Officer.

The Elected Member's Representative addressed the Committee on behalf of the Elected Member.

The Elected Member's Representative and the Elected Member responded to questions from the Committee, the Investigating Officer and the Complainant's Representative.

The Investigating Officer and the Complainants Representative each summed up.

The Investigating Officer, Complainant, Complainant's Representative, Former Elected Member and Former Elected Member's Representative withdrew from the meeting whilst the Committee gave detailed consideration to the matter. The respective parties returned, and it was:

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee had considered the evidence set out in report GD.64/21 and listened to the submissions made by the Complainant and the Elected Member's Representative.

The Standards Committee agreed that the Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct by failing to treat another with respect and failing to promote high standards of conduct.

The Standards Committee considered the sanctions available to them and agreed the following sanctions for the Elected Member:

- That a formal letter be sent to the Elected Member
- That the Standards Committee report its findings in public to the Council

#### **St.16/21      SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

During consideration of the above item the Chair noted that the meeting had been in progress for 3 hours; and moved that Council Procedure Rule 9, in relation to the duration of meetings be suspended in order that the meeting could continue to enable the remaining items of business to be transacted, and it was:

AGREED that the meeting should continue beyond three hours in duration to enable the remaining items of business to be transacted.

*The Committee adjourned at 12:36 and reconvened at 13:30*

#### **ST.17/21      ALLEGATION THAT AN ELECTED MEMBER HAS BREACHED THE CODE OF CONDUCT (4)**

(Public and Press Paragraph 1)

Also Present –      Complainant  
                         Complainant's Representative  
                         Elected Member  
                         Elected Member's Representative

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented report GD.65/21 regarding an allegation that an Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Investigating Officer presented his finding and responded to questions from the Committee.

The Complainant addressed the Committee.

The Complainant responded to questions from the Elected Member's Representative and Investigating Officer.

The Investigating Officer and the Elected Member's Representative each summed up.

The Investigating Officer, Complainant, Complainant's Representative, Former Elected Member and Former Elected Member's Representative withdrew from the meeting whilst the Committee gave detailed consideration to the matter. The respective parties returned, and it was:

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee had considered the evidence set out in report GD.64/21 and listened to the submissions made by the Complainant and the Elected Member's Representative.

The Standards Committee agreed that the Elected Member had not breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

**ST.18/21 ALLEGATION THAT AN ELECTED MEMBER HAS BREACHED THE CODE OF CONDUCT (5)**  
(Public and Press Paragraph 1)

Also Present – Complainant  
Complainant's Representative  
Elected Member  
Elected Member's Representative

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented report GD.66/21 regarding an allegation that an Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Investigating Officer presented his finding and responded to questions from the Elected Member's Representative and the Committee.

The Complainant addressed the Committee.

The Complainant responded to questions from the Elected Member's Representative and the Committee.

The Elected Member's Representative addressed the Committee on behalf of the Elected Member.

The Elected Member's Representative and the Elected Member responded to questions from the Committee, the Investigating Officer, the complainant and the Complainant's Representative.

The Investigating Officer and the Complainants Representative each summed up.

The Investigating Officer, Complainant, Complainant's Representative, Former Elected Member and Former Elected Member's Representative withdrew from the meeting whilst the Committee gave detailed consideration to the matter. The respective parties returned, and it was:

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee had considered the evidence set out in report

GD.65/21 and listened to the submissions made by the Complainant and the Elected Member's Representative.

The Standards Committee agreed that the Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct by disclosing confidential information that was given to them as a Member, failing to treat another and an external organisation with respect.

The Committee also found that the Elected Member had breached the Council's Email and Internet Protocol by not identifying that an email had been sent in a personal capacity.

The Standards Committee considered the sanctions available to them and agreed the following sanctions for the Elected Member:

That a formal letter be sent to the Elected Member

The Meeting ended at: 15:30