

# Standards Report



## Standards Working Group Update Report

Report author **Sharon Bridglalsingh**  
 Director, Law and Governance  
 01908 252095

Exempt / confidential / not for publication	<b>No</b>
---	-----------

### 1. Purpose

1.1 This report sets out the recommendations from the Standards Working Group established at Standards Committee held on 9 July 2019. It seeks agreement from the Standards Committee for adoption of the Best Practice Recommendations. It also seeks agreement to make amendments to the Appeals process.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Standards Committee agrees the Best Practice Recommendations as set out at **Annex A**.
- 2.2 That the Standards Committee agrees to changes to the Standards Appeal process as indicated in the track changed document at **Annex B**.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 At the Standards Committee meeting held on 9 July 2019, a Working Group was established to look at two matters. They were to review the Best Practice Recommendations (“the Recommendations”) from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and to consider whether some or all of the Recommendations should be adopted by Milton Keynes. They were also to consider whether the current standards appeals process should be retained and on the basis that it is retained if it should be amended.
- 3.2 The Working Group comprised Councillors Miles, McPake and Geary and Parish Councillor Verma. There have been three meetings of the Working Group. The Working Group has also considered the issues in email correspondence between meetings

## 4. Best Practice Recommendations

- 4.1 In considering the Best Practice Recommendations the Working Group requested that Officers seek feedback from all the Parish and Town Councils in Milton Keynes and from the three political groups on Milton Keynes Council. The feedback received from Town and Parish Councils and one of the Political Groups has been circulated to Members of the Committee electronically.
- 4.2 The Working Group has agreed with most of the Best Practice Recommendations as per the initial draft from the Committee on Standards in Public Life however in the light of the feedback they have recommended some changes. The full recommendations and changes are set out in **Annex A**.
- 4.3 In summary the two main changes are that a review of the Code of Conduct should only take place every three years rather than every year (as per the CSPL recommendation) and that it is not recommended by the Working Group that complaints about Parish Councillor conduct should only be made by the Chair or Parish Council as a whole. The Working Group prefer the current position that anyone, including the Clerk, can make a complaint about a Parish Councillor.

## 5. The Appeal Process

- 5.1 The Working Group have considered whether the current appeal process should be retained and recommend that it should be maintained.
- 5.2 The Working group have however recommended some amendments to the process to make it much clearer to understand and these are shown in the track changed document at **Annex B**.

## 6. Implications

Financial	N	Human rights, equalities, diversity	Y
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	N
Communication	Y	Procurement	N
Energy Efficiency	N	Workforce	N

(a) Financial implications

There are no financial implications in respect of most of the recommendations.

(b) Legal Implications

The Council has a duty under the Localism Act 2011 to have arrangements in place for investigating and making decisions on allegations that the Code of Conduct has been breached.

(c) Other Implications

Human Rights - The Human Rights Act is engaged in dealing with standards matters.

7. Alternatives

The Standards Committee can agree to all, some or none of the recommendations proposed by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

---

List of Annexes

Annex A - Best Practice Recommendations with Working Group Recommendation and Comments

Annex B - Changes to the Standards Appeal Process