

Standards Committee report



14 October 2021

PERIODIC REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

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Exempt / confidential / not
 for publication

No

1. Purpose

1.1 This periodic report is to advise the Committee of standards issues, including complaints and investigations since the Monitoring Officer last reported to the Standards Committee.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the report be noted.

3. Update on Complaints

3.1 The table, attached as an **Annex** to the report, sets out details of complaints received since the last Standards Committee. At present, there are four live complaints.

3.2 In arriving at her judgement on complaints received, the Monitoring Officer applied the following criteria:

- (a) Was the individual acting as a councillor at the time of the alleged misconduct?
- (b) Does the allegation reveal a prima facie breach of the code?
- (c) Is there a reasonable prospect that the allegation would be upheld?
- (d) Is the matter complained of trivial?
- (e) Is the allegation merely an attempt to initiate an investigation to 'embarrass' the Councillor, for e.g. political purposes?

- (f) Is the matter essentially a dispute or difference of opinion between Members?
- (g) Is the use of the Code of Conduct the appropriate way to resolve concerns?
- (h) Given the range of sanctions available to a council is an investigation likely to improve the good working of the Council; in particular is any finding and sanction likely to improve public confidence in the democratic process?
- (i) Consideration of the case law and guidance.
- (j) Any other substantial consideration particular to the allegation.

3.3 In all cases where the Monitoring Officer has been required to consider a Code of Conduct complaint she has consulted with the Independent Person, as required by the Localism Act 2011.

4. Training

4.1 It has been agreed with the Chair that Assessment Sub-Committee specific training will occur before each meeting with the relevant Assessment Sub-Committee members.

4.2 The Committee members attended case-based scenario training on 27 September 2021.

4.3 The Monitoring Officer continues to arrange periodic training on Conduct and the Principles of Public Life ('The Nolan Principals') both the Milton Keynes Council Members and the Members of the Parish and Town Councils in the area.

5. Independent Persons

5.1 The Council maintains a list of five Independent Persons whose appointments were approved by the Council in September 2020. All of those Persons on the approved list are considered to be competent and experienced.

5.2 There have been no issues relating to Independent Persons since the last Committee meeting.

6. LGA Code of Conduct

6.1 On 21 July 2021, the Committee decided to hold a workshop to discuss the Council's Current Code of Conduct and the New Model Code of Conduct.

6.2 The Workshop will be held on 7 October 2021 and a report will be prepared ahead of the next Committee meeting in March 2022.

7. Parish Councillor Recruitment

- 7.1 The Standards Committee has the responsibility of recruiting Parish Councillors to serve as representatives on the Committee and Assessment / Hearing Sub-Committees involving Parish Councillors. The Committee can appoint up to four Parish Councillors.
 - 7.2 Whilst the recruitment was ongoing, the Monitoring Officer and the Chair agreed to extend Councillor Winsor's term until the new Parish Councillor's were co-opted.
 - 7.3 Following an extension to the application deadline, the Committee received a total of six applications.
 - 7.4 On 9 September 2021, Councillors McPake, Verma and Wallis sat on the shortlisting panel. Chris Fogden, Independent Person, was advising the panel. Four out of the six applicants have been invited to interview.
 - 7.5 Interviews are scheduled to take place on 29 September 2021 and 21 October 2021. The Monitoring Officer will circulate an email to the Committee to advise of the successful applicants.
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List of Annexes

Annex	Table of Standards Complaints received since the last Standards Committee held on 21 July 2021
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List of Background Papers

None.