

Contact Officer: Nicola Sylvester

**KIRKLEES COUNCIL**  
**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Monday 10th October 2022**

Present: Councillor Jo Lawson (Chair)  
Councillor Harry McCarthy  
Councillor Mohan Sokhal  
Councillor Michael Watson  
Councillor Alison Munro

In attendance: Michael Stow – Independent Person

Apologies: Councillor James Homewood  
Councillor Martyn Bolt

**1 Membership of the Committee**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bolt and Councillor Homewood.

**2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

**3 Interests**

No interests were declared.

**4 Admission of the Public**

It was agreed that all agenda items would be held in public session.

**5 Deputation/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

**6 Public Question Time**

No questions were asked.

**7 Code of Conduct complaints update**

The Committee received a report which provided an update on complaints that had been received since the previous meeting of the Committee on the 15 March 2022. The Committee was informed that the report looked at complaints received from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 to end of August 2022 and gave a breakdown. The report advised that since 1 March 2022 the Monitoring Officer had received 9 complaints relating to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct. This figure included three complaints that were made against more than one member of Kirklees Council. There were no complaints relating to Town or Parish Councillors. Of these 9, 5 were not progressed after the initial assessment process. The remaining 4 complaints were

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currently being investigated before being considered under the initial assessment process.

During consideration of the complaints update, Members of the Committee discussed when they felt it was appropriate to remove any standards decisions from the Kirklees website.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be received and noted.

### 8 **Cases and News Update**

The Committee received a report which provided an update on matters arising in terms of local government ethics, including relevant case law and decisions of other local authorities or any existing standards boards.

The report also provided an update on the work of the Committee on Standards in Public Life that followed on from the report on 'Ethical Standards in Local Government.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be received and noted.

### 9 **Update on Actions from March Standards Committee**

The Committee received a report on the actions requested by the Committee at the March 2022 meeting which included:

- (i) That the Monitoring Officer be delegated to draft an amendment to the standards process to introduce a "fast track" process to address repeat complaints and to report to this Committee.
- (ii) That the Monitoring officer works with Town and Parish councils to consider options for increasing involvement at Town and Parish Council level in the Standards process and to report back to this Committee in September with proposals.
- (iii) That this Committee working with NALC and the LGA (as appropriate) to raise the issue of the delay in the government response to the CSPL report write as a Council (or jointly with NALC and/or LGA) to the Minister highlighting the need for a formal response.
- (iv) That work be undertaken with Members and Officers to update and refresh and raise awareness to the Member Officer protocol and the importance of that to the efficient and effective working of the Council.
- (v) That more regular workshop and engagement sessions with Members and Officers to discuss issues of common concern about behaviours are arranged.
- (vi) That further actions and training support be considered including training for Planning Chairs, Case Law, and the new Code of Conduct.
- (vii) That the new code of conduct be emailed to all Members with a requirement of a received and read confirmation.

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The Committee noted that:

- (i) An amended version of the Fast Track process had been drafted,
- (ii) Town and Parish Councils had been contacted with options on how they could be involved in the standards investigation process and had been invited to the Standards Committee meeting,
- (iii) A formal response from the Minister had been received by the Committee on Standards in Public Life,
- (iv) Initial plans and discussions had taken place regarding the Member-Officer protocol, members would be kept informed and asked for their involvement,
- (v) Workshops were to take place to allow members and officers to share views on areas of mutual concern,
- (vi) Members training on the Code of Conduct was proposed to take place in Autumn 2022,
- (vii) The new code of conduct had been sent to all members.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the report be received and noted.
- (ii) That the Fast Track process be noted.
- (iii) That Town and Parish Councils be invited to future Standards Committees.
- (iv) That a link to the Member Officer protocol be circulated to Committee Members.
- (v) That an Officer-Member workshop be arranged on Effective Communication.
- (vi) That the Standards Process Review be updated.
- (vii) That complaints relating to Members who breached the Code of Conduct remained on Kirklees website for a period of 4 years.
- (viii) That complaints relating to Members where no breach to the Code of Conduct was found are not logged on Kirklees website.
- (ix) That Member complaints on Kirklees website are updated every 6 months.