Standards Committee Annual Report
31 May 2018 to 1 April 2019

Foreword by the Chairman

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Standards Committee for the period July 2017 to April 2019.

We have also included other areas of our work in addition to the committee’s core responsibilities of monitoring the effectiveness of the current Code of Conduct, the arrangements for handling complaints and the determination of the complaints themselves. I would particularly highlight the sections on the evidence we presented to the Committee on Standards in Public Life and the need to improve training for borough and parish councillors in relation to GDPR and the Code of Conduct.

In everything we do to promote and maintain high standards of conduct across the council lies a determination and unflagging sense of independence to deliver a professional and high-quality support to the work of the council.

I commend the report to you and hope that you will find it both interesting and informative.

Peter Moore, OBE
Chairman, Standards Committee

May 2019

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

This is the annual report of the Standards Committee for 2018/19. During this municipal year the committee has analysed the learning from complaints that have been received in order to provide advice and guidance to councillors. In particular, following several complaints, a review of members declarations of interests has been carried out to make it easier for councillors to declare their interests clearly and keep their register of interests up to date.

Changes have also been made to the register of gifts and hospitality to ensure that is up to date and for ease of use.

The Standards Committee seeks to promote and maintain high standards of conduct across the council. In order to achieve this the committee advises the council on the adoption of a Code of Conduct and monitors the effectiveness of the current code.

The last annual report was for the period July 2016 to July 2017. The committee did not produce an annual report for July 2017 to July 2018 and therefore this report contains the complaint figures for this period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Complaints made July 2017/April 2018</th>
<th>Complaints made May 2018/April 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not investigated</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No breach of the Code</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of the Code</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal settlement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still under investigation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Committee on Standards in Public Life

Call for evidence from the committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL)
The committee established a working party and submitted a reply to the call for evidence in May 2018. The response advocated the role of Independent members in determining complaints, sought an increase in the range of sanctions for breaches of the Code of Conduct and called for independent members on Standards Committees to be given voting rights.

The Local Government Ethical Standards Report was published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in January 2019 and the committee is considering the recommendations arising out of the report that do not need legislative change with a view to implementing changes to its arrangements for determining complaints to accord with the good practice suggested in this report.

Recruitment process for Independent Persons and Independent Standards Assessors
At its March 2019 meeting, the committee considered arrangements for further appointments to appoint Independent Persons and Independent Standards Assessors whose terms of office had expired or were due to expire and who are involved in the arrangements to determine alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by councillors. A recruitment process has been agreed to replace two Independent Persons and two Independent Standards Assessors with both sets of appointments to be effective by October 2019. Following the January recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life in its Local Government Ethical Standards Report, the period of appointments has been agreed at two years with one further subsequent appointment and this has been agreed by Council. This will ensure that the Independent Standard Assessors and the Independent Persons are seen as remaining independent.

Training for councillors
In March 2019, the committee received a report on the level of training undertaken by councillors. It found that the take up of Code of Conduct training had been intermittent but noted the improved councillor training programme for the forthcoming year. The committee has recommended that all group leaders seek to ensure that all their group members attend both Code of Conduct training and GDPR training as this is fundamental to ensuring that councillors maintain high standards of conduct to reduce levels of complaints.

The committee has also undertaken a review of the levels of Code of Conduct training and GDPR training undertaken by parish councils. While Hampshire Association of Local Councils offer training sessions on Codes of Conduct and GDPR, the take up by parishes and town councils was found to be patchy. The council is considering running Code of Conduct training and GDPR training for the parishes in the Civic Offices as a pilot to see whether this can increase take up of training.

Looking to the year ahead
The Standards Committee is made up of four independent members, four Parish Council representatives and four borough councillors. These are:

**Independent Members:**
Liz Morris, Keith Bastin, Chris Evans, Peter Moore OBE

**Parish Council representatives:**
Cllr Jo Slimin, Cllr Leslie Fryer, Cllr Linda Agnew, one vacant seat

**Borough councillors:**
Councillor Jack Cousens, Councillor Ronald Hussey, Cllr Dan Putty, one vacant seat

The Standards Committee agrees its work programme at the first meeting of the municipal year and keeps the programme under review during the currency of the year.

More information about the Code of Conduct, the complaints process and a complaint form are available on the council’s website at www.basingstoke.gov.uk