

Standards Committee Annual Report

2020 to 2021

Foreword by the Chairman

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Standards Committee for the period 1st May 2020 to 31st March 2021.

This report covers 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.

It also gives details of the other work undertaken by the Committee and I would particularly highlight the work carried out in considering the Best Practice Recommendations in the Ethical Standards Report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life and thank my colleagues for the work undertaken in this respect.

The Committee has welcomed new colleagues this year- Verity Murrice and Camilla Proctor joined in their role as Independent Standards Assessors and Martin Slatford as a parish council representative. Any remaining vacancies for Independent Standards Assessors or Independent Persons will be filled after the

March 2021

Committee considers the adoption of the new Local Government Association model Code of Conduct.

We have faced hitherto unknown challenges this year in conducting meetings remotely due to the current Covid Pandemic. I would like to thank all my colleagues for their patience in dealing with the IT glitches which have become a part of our daily lives - I am sure we all look forward to a normal resumption of meetings in the not too distant future.

In everything we do to promote and maintain high standards of conduct across the Council lies a determination and unfaltering 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.

Chris Evans

Chairman, Standards Committee

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

This is the annual report of the Standards Committee for 2020/21. The 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.

Review of Gifts and Hospitality Register

The Committee has reviewed the Register of Gifts and Hospitality which is a best practice recommendation from the Ethical Standards Report. Declarations were found to be in line with what would be expected for a Borough Council and the declarations made are published for transparency reasons.

Social Media Guidance

The Committee is consulting on the introduction of Social Media Guidance to help Councillors in interacting with the general public through the use of social media having noticed an increased in complaints relating to social media use. It is hoped to conclude this work during the next municipal year.

Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code

This year the LGA has published its new model Code of Conduct after a period of consultation. The government has still to consider the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) from the Ethical Standards report that require legislation. The Borough Council is consequently considering whether to proceed with the adoption of the new model code or whether to delay pending the government's consideration of legislative change. Further consideration will be given to this after the local government elections in May 2021.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL)

The Local Government Ethical Standards Report was published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in January 2019 and the Standards Committee has now implemented CSPL's Good Practice recommendations changes into our procedures for considering complaints against Councillors. During this municipal year the Committee has sought to learn from complaints that have been received in order to provide the best possible advice and guidance to Councillors.

The Committee received 11 complaints this year against either Borough or Town and Parish Councillors.

Outcome	Complaints made May 2020/March 2021
Not investigated	3
No breach of the Code	5
Breach of the Code	1
Still under investigation	1
Withdrawn	1 - complaint form not completed after initial contact

Membership

The Standards Committee is made up of four independent members, four Parish Council representatives and four Borough Councillors. These are:

Independent Members:

Chris Evans, Verity Murrice, Camilla Proctor - one vacancy

Parish Council representatives:

Cllr Jo Slimin, Cllr Leslie Fryer, Cllr Linda Agnew, Martin Slatford

Borough Councillors:

Councillor Jack Cousens, Councillor Ronald Hussey, Councillor Dan Putty, Councillor Carolyn Wooldridge



