

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
20/10/2022 at 3.30 pm

Present: Councillor Williams (Chair)
Councillors K Phythian, M Bashforth and Byrne

Independent Members: Karen Williams

Parish Councillors: Beeley (Saddleworth Parish Council)

Also in Attendance:

Paul Entwistle	Director of Legal
Laila Chowdhury	Constitutional Services
Kaidy McCann	Constitutional Services

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Williamson.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

A Public Question had been received from Mr Neil Wilby which asked:

“How many Standards complaints against elected Members are arising from June's Extraordinary and July's Full Council meetings.

If there are any, and to avoid any risk of jigsaw identification of subject Members, please state the number of complaints against members of the ruling Labour Group and the number, in total, of members of the three opposition parties.

Please also distinguish where a Member is the subject of multiple complaints, where applicable.”

The Chair provided the following response:

“It was not appropriate to advise of live complaints.”

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

6

PROCEDURES UNDER THE STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal which advised the Committee of the Procedure under the Standards Framework.

Members were advised that, Under the arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Members Code of Conduct, a Standards sub-committee was established to consider hearings where an investigator had found breach or breaches of the code and referred assessments. The standards sub-committee currently comprised three members, (one from each group represented on the Standards Committee), one independent person and one Parish Councillor if the matter referred to a Parish Council matter. The sub-committee considered whether a breach of the code had taken place and what sanction, if any to apply. The sub-committee also considered whether a referred complaint should be investigated. Members were provided with a breakdown of the sanctions available at section 1.1 of the report.

Members were informed that it was appropriate for the Committee to consider the procedure outlined at section 1.3 to be adopted by the sub-committee. Members were also requested to consider a position when a standards complaint had not been concluded when a member ceased to be in office. A finding may not be made against a former member however there were some authorities that had decided that a complaint or investigation can be reinstated if the former member was re-elected within a certain period of time.

Members felt that the position would stop contentious issues and would help the complainant understand the issues would not just cease and would pick up where the complaint left off. The position would give Members the ability to review complaints before the assessment.

RESOLVED that:

1. The procedure for a local hearing and composition of the sub-committee be approved.
2. The position outlined in section 1.4 of the report be approved for a period of two years.

The meeting started at 3.45 pm and ended at 4.03 pm