

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**30/11/2023 at 6.00 pm**



**Present:** Councillor H. Harrison (in the Chair)  
Councillors J. Hussain and Al-Hamdani  
Shaw and Crompton Parish Council – Councillor Swift  
Saddleworth Parish Council – Councillor Blackmore  
Independent Person – Mrs K. Williams

Also in Attendance:  
Paul Entwistle – Director of Legal Services  
Peter Thompson – Constitutional Services

1           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Byrne.  
The Committee noted that Councillor Williamson had resigned her membership of the Committee for the duration of this meeting and was replaced by Councillor Al-Hamdani.

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**

No public questions were received.

5           **MINUTES**

Resolved:  
That subject to the removal of Councillor Shuttleworth from the list of Members present, the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee, held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023, be approved as a correct record.

6           **LGA SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Legal Services, which advised that at various training sessions for members on the Members Code of Conduct, members had highlighted the area of the use of social media in the work which they do and the interrelationship with the Code of Conduct.

The Local Government Association (LGA) had produced social media guidance for Councillors. The relevant guidance produced by the LGA in this context, namely 'Overview of social media for Councillors, Guide to the role of Councillors on social media and Guide to tackling online abuse' was attached as an Appendix to the report. The Committee were requested to consider the guidance produced and to recommend wider circulation of the documents.

A member of the Committee, in referring to the report, suggested that under the heading: "Reporting an issue to the social media platform" more information be provided including details about how this task could actually be undertaken.

Resolved:

1. That the Local Government Association Social Media Guidance be circulated to all members of the Council and to Parish Councillors in the Borough.
2. That additional information be provided under the heading: "Reporting an issue to the social media platform" detailing how the task of reporting a relevant issue can practically be undertaken.

7

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Legal Services which advised members that the Council had agreed a Members Code of Conduct which has been re-confirmed at the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and a copy of the code of conduct was attached at the Appendix to the report. At that Council meeting, it had been resolved to develop and adopt a mandatory duty to report safeguarding concerns, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, into the Members Code of Conduct. The Standards Committee was therefore asked to consider this matter and to make a recommendation to Council thereon. The proposed paragraph for insertion into the code of conduct would be at paragraph 11 would state: - "If any member has any safeguarding concerns, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, in connection with any person, it is the duty of the member to report these concerns to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)".

The Director of Legal Services reminded members that as a separate issue, on a matter related to the code of conduct, the committee had previously agreed that a complaint or investigation can be reinstated against a member who ceases to be in office, if the person is re-elected within two years and the matter is referred to the Standards Committee for consideration. It was recommended that such a consideration should be determined by the Standards Sub-Committee.

Resolved:

1. That Council at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 be recommended to amend the Members Code of Conduct by including the following wording at paragraph 11: - "If any member has any safeguarding concerns, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, in connection with any person, it is the duty of the member to report these concerns to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)".
2. That on those occasions where a complaint or investigation against a member who ceases to be in office is outstanding and if that person is re-elected within two years and the matter is referred to the Standards Committee for consideration, then such a consideration shall be determined by the Standards Sub-Committee.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.15pm