

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
05/03/2026 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor Harrison (Chair)
Councillors Byrne, Marland, Nasheen and Shuttleworth
Parish Councillor Roger Blackmore (Saddleworth Parish Council), Town Councillor Lee Navesey (Shaw and Crompton Town Council), Mark Reynolds (Independent Member), Karen Williams (Independent Member)

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Marc Hince	Elected Member
Alex Bougatef	Group Solicitor
Jack Grennan	Constitutional Services
Councillor Lisa Navesey	Elected Member

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies received.

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**

There were no public questions received.

5 **MINUTES**

A discussion was held on the minutes of the Standards Sub-Committee meeting held on 11th November. Councillors Marc Hince and Lisa Navesey was invited to address the committee. It was noted that the recommendation for Councillor Kenyon to send a personal apology to Councillors Shah, Hince and Navesey had not yet been fulfilled, and it was raised that this would be chased up with the Director of Legal with the committee being informed either way.

Members noted that this was not the first time that a Standards Sub-Committee recommendations had not been met and noted that councillor standards across the UK needed improving.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 24th June 2025 and the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Sub-Committee held on 11th November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

6 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they contain exempt information under paragraph(s) 1 and 2

of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

7

MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

The Director of Legal introduced the item, noting that there had been a national deterioration of member and officer relationships. The thinking behind the reworking of the protocol was that there was both a lack of powers and a need for a more robust member/officer protocol. Some parties feel that certain parties and members are treated differently and there needed to be an understanding that this shouldn't be the case. Specific scenarios were outlined. It was highlighted that the previous version of the protocol was brief.

The Chair noted that feedback on the protocol should be received by Wednesday 11th March 2026 at the latest.

Members suggested that some member/member scenarios would be helpful alongside the member/officer ones. Members also queried the timescales for resolving each scenario, noting an urgency timeframe and it was highlighted that the plan was to deal with issues quickly.

Members noted that training around this protocol would hopefully eliminate most cases as members would know how to behave in those scenarios. Members also queried how this protocol would work and whether it would be compulsory. It was noted that whilst it wouldn't be compulsory, it would be a public document that would go to full council and standards complaints could refer to it.

Members queried whether officers would make complaints against members and whether officers would be protected. It was noted that this depended on staff members but the importance of staff raising complaints was highlighted, and reassurance was given that officers would be protected.

RESOLVED that the protocol be agreed in principle.

8

MEMBER/OFFICER SURVEY

The Director of Legal presented the survey, noting that this was part of the Member/Officer process, with the survey going to all members to complete. It was noted that members could request anonymity for their answers.

Members noted the positive approach, querying where the information would go. It was explained that the hope was that there would be no issues, but that if there were, they would need to be investigated.

Members queried how often the survey would be undertaken, as it could be useful for this to be repeated. It was noted that the Director of Legal was happy to take comment from the Committee as to when they felt it would be useful. The Chair noted that, as with the previous item, feedback should be sent in by Wednesday 11th March 2026.

Members suggested that mandatory training for officers and members on how to request things would be helpful, and that the scenarios would be helpful as part of the training.

Members queried how many responses to the survey would be needed to make it meaningful. The Director of Legal noted that uptake was being looked at.

RESOLVED that the survey be agreed in principle.

9

STANDARDS COMPLAINTS UPDATE

The Director of Legal presented an update into standards complaints. Members queried the costs of independent investigators, time frames and the standards process.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

The meeting started at 6.05 pm and ended at 7.15 pm