

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
22/04/2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor Williams (Chair)
Councillors Williamson, Briggs, Harrison and Byrne
(Substitute)

Independent Members: Karen Williams

Parish Councillors: Beeley (Saddleworth Parish Council)

Also in Attendance:

Paul Entwistle

Sian Walter-Browne

Borough Solicitor

Principal Constitutional
Services Officer

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Feay and Ms Koosar.

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 OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 22nd October 2018 be approved as a correct record..

6 **CONSIDERATION OF THE LGA MODEL CODE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Legal Services which updated the Committee on the publication of the LGA Model Code of Conduct for Members.

Members were informed that the Local Government Association (LGA) had produced an updated code of conduct for members for consideration by each authority. The new LGA Model code was relatively straightforward to follow, however the draft code

had received a mixed response from some councils who had indicated they would not propose to adopt it as published, as they preferred their own code.

The Committee noted the key points from the Standards Section of the LGA model code included that it:

- aimed to clarify when the code would apply
- made it a requirement to comply with any sanction imposed following a finding that the code had been breached. At present, as members were aware, sanctions for breach of the Members Code of Conduct were very limited.
- Set the threshold for registration of gifts and hospitality at £50

Appendix B of the LGA Model Code set out the requirements in relation to registration and declaration of interests. This was a different approach from the current code which referred to a personal and/or prejudicial interest and requirements to disclose in those circumstances.

Members asked for and received clarification of the following:
Changes from personal/pecuniary interests - The terminology was different in relation to personal interests. Pecuniary interests still existed.

Why some authorities had not adopted the draft code - Some had decided to retain their own code.

Was it updated to include use of social media – It was confirmed it had been.

Had all Greater Manchester (GM) authorities adopted it – Across gm it was going to Standards Committees for their consideration and comment before going to full Council.

Was £50 the lowest threshold for declaring gifts/hospitality – There was no need to declare anything of lower value.

Could Oldham keep its own code and modify it to include social media – It could do but it was hoped there would be consistency across GM as there were joint committees on which the same standards should apply to all.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. The Council be recommended to adopt the LGA Model Code of Conduct for Members.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.25 pm