

Public Document Pack
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
24/06/2025 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor Harrison (Chair)
Councillors Kouser, Bashforth, Byrne, Chauhan and Williamson

Also in Attendance:
Councillor Roger Blackmore (Saddleworth Parish Council)
Karen Williams (Independent Person)
Alex Bougatef (Interim Borough Solicitor/Monitoring Officer)
Peter Thompson (Constitutional Services)

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hindle and from Town Councillor Lee Navesey (Shaw and Crompton Town Council).

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 for this meeting of the Standards Committee to consider.

5 **MINUTES**

Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee, held on 4th September 2025, be approved as a correct record.

6 **COMPOSITION OF STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Interim Borough Solicitor which advised that the purpose of the Standards Sub-Committee is to deal with the determination of referred complaints from the Council's Monitoring Officer and any subsequent hearings that may be required.

The Interim Borough Solicitor reported that the Standards sub-committee will comprise five Oldham Borough Council Members and an Independent Person. If the matter relates to a Parish/Town Council Member, the Sub-Committee will include at least one Parish/Town Council Member.

The Standards Sub-Committee will be politically balanced and comprising two Labour Group members and one each from the Liberal Democrats, the Conservatives and the Oldham Group.

Resolved:
That the Standards Committee confirms the composition of its Sub-Committee, as outlined above.

7 **REVIEW OF MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT MATTERS**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Borough Solicitor that asked Members to note the current Member Code of Conduct and Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code, which was last reviewed in September 2024.



The main issues detailed, in the Interim Borough Solicitor's report included:

- a. Councillor Code of Conduct
- b. General principles of Councillor conduct
- c. Application of the Code of Conduct
- d. Standards of Councillor conduct

The Committee was advised that the Standards of Councillor conduct section sets out the obligations of Members, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of a Councillor. Should the conduct of a Member fall short of the reported standards, a complaint may be made against that Member, which may ultimately result in action being taken. Guidance was included, in the report, to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

The Committee considered the report in detail and raised the following questions and queries:

1. The Committee requested that there should be mandatory training that occurs twice a year regarding the members code of conduct.
2. The Committee requested that training should be something more interactive than on previous occasions for example scenarios or a type of workshop setting.
3. There also needs to be something which demonstrates members actions and consequences, such as a report to be submitted to the Council highlighting members names who have allegedly breached the code. (with a naming/shaming consequence for any Member where a negative finding was reached)
4. The Committee agreed that there needed to be more transparency so for example they all agreed that members public website profile should evidence that the mandatory training has been completed, if the member doesn't engage, this should be publicised.
5. The Standards Committee requested something to be brought before a future meeting with details of members (names redacted) which evidences complaints that have been rejected, so that they could understand the type of complaints and any patterns.
6. The Standards Committee also requested if the 'Mayor's script', for Full Council meetings, could be amended to include specific wording that says all participants (i.e. all 60 Members of Oldham Borough Council) agree (at Council meetings) to abide by the Members Code of Conduct. This could then also link to a possible 'contract' that all members sign up to annually regarding the minimum standard of behaviour and confirmation of their acceptance of the Code of Conduct.

7. The Standards Committee agreed that the Code of Conduct should be amended to incorporate some of the agreed above points once they had been resolved at full Council, but they were all clear this did need to progress to a report at full Council for debate.

Resolved:

That the Standards Committee

1. Approves the report.
2. That the Mayor's Script for Council meetings be amended to include specific wording that says all participants (i.e. all 60 Members of Oldham Borough Council) agree (at Council meetings) to abide by the Members Code of Conduct. This could then also link to a possible 'contract' that all members sign up to annually regarding the minimum standard of behaviour and confirmation of their acceptance of the Code of Conduct.
3. That the Interim Borough Solicitor be requested to liaise with the Local Government Association to source suitable training for members on the Code of Conduct.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.35pm

This page is intentionally left blank