

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Standards Sub-Committee**

Held in the Committee Room 1, Woodgreen, Witney at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 23 March 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors: Norman MacRae MBE (Chairman), Andrew Beaney (Vice-Chair), Ted Fenton and Elizabeth Poskitt.

Officers: Susan Sale (Monitoring Officer), Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Democratic Services Manager) and Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officer).

1 Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Coles.

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ted Fenton wanted it known, that he had recently participated in a similar Committee meeting at Oxfordshire County Council.

3 Oxfordshire Wide Code of Conduct

Susan Sale the Monitoring Officer, introduced the Members Code of Conduct Report. The Monitoring Officer asked the Committee to consider and approve a revised Member Code of Conduct, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, and recommend its adoption and inclusion in the West Oxfordshire Constitution to the Council. The following recommendations were requested to be approved:

- a) To note the report and consider the revised draft code of conduct for Members of West Oxfordshire District Council in annex A.
- b) To recommend to West Oxfordshire District Council that they formally adopt the Code of Conduct for Members effective from 18 May 2022.
- c) To recommend to West Oxfordshire District Council that they include the Code of Conduct for Members within their Constitution effective from 18 May 2022.

Mrs Sale also requested an additional recommendation to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of Standards Sub-Committee, to make minor and consequential amendments.

The Chair commented that he thought it was an advantage to have the Code of Conduct, County wide. Councillor Fenton, agreed as many Councillors wore many hats, as District, Town and Parish Councillors.

Councillors discussed the report, and the Monitoring Officer clarified a few terms, and confirmed that all the Monitoring Officers in Oxfordshire had decided collectively, to apply a changes to the LGA model, in order to simplify the code of conduct.

Resolved that, Councillors agreed to approve the Monitoring Officers recommendations:

- a) To note the report and consider the revised draft code of conduct for Members of West Oxfordshire District Council in annex A.

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- b) To recommend to West Oxfordshire District Council that they formally adopt the Code of Conduct for Members effective from 18 May 2022.
- c) To recommend to West Oxfordshire District Council that they include the Code of Conduct for Members within their Constitution effective from 18 May 2022.
- d) Approved to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of Standards Sub-Committee, to make minor and consequential amendments.

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Standards Sub-committee - Hearings Procedure

The Monitoring Officer, Susan Sale introduced the Local Hearing Panel Procedure Rules report. The report governed the procedures of the Local Hearing Panel when it met as a Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee to determine an allegation that a Member had breached the Code of Conduct. The procedures were written in line with the principles of natural justice and fairness.

The Councillors were asked to note the report, approve the procedures and delegate authority for any minor amendments to the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Chairman.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that consultation on the report had been carried out with Group Leaders and the Independent Person and she had received feedback from Councillors Prosser and Graham.

The Councillors agreed that under Definitions – Subject Councillor should also include Town Councillor. Councillors also confirmed that the term his/her should be replaced where possible

Councillors concluded that it is **resolved** that the Monitoring Officers recommendations are approved:

- a) The Councillors noted the report, approved the procedures and approved delegate authority for any minor amendments to the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Chairman
- b) The Councillors agreed that under Definitions – Subject Councillor should also include Town Councillor
- c) Councillors also confirmed that the term his/her should be replaced where possible

The Meeting closed at 2.45 pm

CHAIRMAN