

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes

FRIDAY, 15 JULY 2022

PRESENT: Councillor G Bond (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, D Fowler, T Hall, I Herdman,
Councillor B A Hughes, Mr H Mawdsley, P Roberts and P Taylor
and Mr H Mawdsley,

APOLOGIES: Councillors B Emery, K J Jackson and P Wilkinson

1 **URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS, IF ANY (24 HOURS NOTICE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE CHAIRMAN).**

There were no urgent items.

2 **TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 25 March 2022 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY:**

Councillor Roberts declared an ‘other’ interest in Agenda Item 7 (Exempt minutes of the previous meeting) in that he was named in those minutes.

Mark Trillo took the opportunity to define what constituted a ‘Disclosable Pecuniary Interest’ when this was queried by members.

4 **GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS**

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) considered that robust standards arrangements were needed to safeguard local democracy, maintain high standards of conduct and to protect ethical practice in local government.

In 2018, CSPL undertook a review of local government ethical standards. The Council responded to the consultation exercise which informed the report. The full details of the outcomes of the review, including best practice and recommendations, were reported to the Committee on 22 March 2019 (the CSPL was appended to the report).

A further report was presented to the Committee on 19 July 2019. This informed members about the best practice recommendations which were incorporated into the Council’s Ethical Framework where appropriate.

The Government published its response to the report on 18 March 2022 and this was also appended to the report.

Standards Committee (SMDC) - 15 July 2022

A possible change to the current practice at SMDC was with regard to the display of personal contact details for Councillors showing on the 'Declarations of Interest' form which was on the SMDC website. The form could be amended so that the Councillor's home address was not showing.

Monitoring Officer Mark Trillo (MT) confirmed that the only current statutory sanction was a fine up to £5,000 for the failure to disclose an interest. Complaints were still dealt with at District level and this Council had its own sanctions which were referred to Full Council. A recommendation could be made to the Councillor's Group Leader for them to be removed from a particular Committee. Also, measures were available to prevent a Councillor being in contact with a particular member of staff. MT also confirmed that, if a complaint appeared to indicate criminal behaviour, the matter was referred to the Police for them to decide whether that was the case.

RESOLVED – That the report be **NOTED**.

5 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

6 **TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

RESOLVED – That the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 25 March 2022 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7 **STANDARDS COMMITTEE COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT**

Members considered a report on complaints made under the Code of Conduct in the period since the Committee last met.

The meeting closed at 10.32 am

_____ Chairman _____ Date