

Standards Committee

1. Standards Committee

Appointed by Council at the first business meeting of the municipal year with responsibility for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst elected members and officers.

2. Membership

- (a) **Political Balance.** The committee is required to have proportional political balance in accordance with requirements of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.
- (b) **Membership.** 7 members
- (c) **Chairing the Committee.** Chairman and Vice Chairman appointed by the Council at the first business meeting of the new municipal year. In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice Chairman a chairman for the meeting may be appointed by the Committee. Any permanent replacement of the Chairman or Vice Chairman requires full Council approval.

3. Terms of Reference

- (a) To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members, co-opted members, town and parish councillors and employees
- (b) To advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the [Code of Conduct for Elected Members](#)
- (c) To monitor the operation of the Codes of Conduct
- (e) To ensure members, co-opted members and town and parish councillors receive appropriate advice and training on registration of interests, the code of conduct and standards of behaviour generally
- (f) To decide on applications for dispensations in respect of members interests
- (g) To oversee the production of the Standards Annual Report and recommend it to Council
- (h) To determine allegations received in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and supporting regulations

4. Sub-committees of the Standards Committee

The Hearing Panel

The Hearing Panel may be convened by the Monitoring Officer when required:

- (a) To conduct hearings and make decisions on allegations following investigation
- (b) To make decisions on allegations where the Monitoring Officer considers it is appropriate to refer the initial complaint to the Panel for determination

Composition

- (a) 3 Members of the Standards Committee on a politically proportionate basis
- (b) The Chair to be appointed on ad hoc basis at the commencement of the meeting
- (c) The Panel will seek and take into account the views of an Independent Person before making a decision on any allegation which has been investigated.
- (d) Where a complaint concerns a town or parish councillor the Panel may also seek the views of a Parish Representative before making a decision on any allegation which has been investigated.

5. Independent Person

(a) The Localism Act 2011 requires Full Council to appoint an Independent Person to assist the Monitoring Officer, Standards Committee and members with the determination of complaints about members, co-opted members and town and parish councillors.

(b) The appointment will follow a process of public advertisement, application and selection.

(c) The Independent Person is not a member of the Standards Committee, or of any of its sub-committees (Hearing Panels), but may attend meetings of the Standards Committee and is invited to attend all meetings of the Hearings Panel.

(d) The views of the Independent Person must be sought and taken into consideration before the Standards Committee takes any decision on whether the member's conduct constitutes a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

(e) More detailed information on the role of the Independent Person and his/her involvement in the investigation of complaints is contained in the [Protocol relating to the Independent Person](#).

Notes

Under the Localism Act 2011 the appointment of a Standards Committee is discretionary.