

Minutes of: **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 3rd April 2025

Present: Councillor K Hussain (in the Chair)
Councillors A Booth, R Gold, D Green, M Hayes, J Hook, D Quinn
and D Vernon

Also in attendance: Jacqui Dennis, Director of Law and Democratic Services.
Michael Cunliffe, Democratic Services.
Independent Persons: Craig Ainsworth and Stuart Birtwell

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor T Rafiq and J Gallagher, Head of Governance.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & ANY MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the last meeting held on the 27th November 2024 were approved as a correct record.

4 MEMBER ATTENDANCE STATISTICS

The Standards Committee received a report which gave details of all Councillor attendance at Committee meetings from the beginning of the Municipal Year up to the 1st April 2025.

The summary included public facing meetings as listed on the data information and attendance summaries for other meetings (including private meetings) which are provided to political groups informally on a monthly basis.

Craig Ainsworth commented was there a threshold expectation of attendance and wondered what attendance figures were for training and how this was addressed in political groups. If a figure was set for 75% of expected attendance, then the report for this Committee could reflect that.

Jacqui Dennis stated there was no set attendance percentage but referred to the six-month rule for non-attendance. The data was presented at the meeting for transparency.

Members commented that group whips monitor the data and being a representative for local residents it was good practice to demonstrate the responsibility for fulfilling the role.

It was suggested if training data should come to this meeting and Jacqui Dennis reported she could link this work via Member Development.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted and the attendance update was placed on the agenda around every six months.

5 CONSTITUTION UPDATE- PROBITY IN PLANNING CODE OF CONDUCT

Jacqui Dennis explained that at the Annual Council meeting on the 22nd May 2024, the Council received a report explaining that the Constitution should be reviewed annually and agreed the various sections for review over the forthcoming municipal year 2024-2025.

The Constitution sets out how the Council operates; how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The Council has a legal duty to publish an up-to-date Constitution and review regularly.

Over the course of 2024-2025, Probity in Planning Guidance was proposed for review along with other areas.

The Probity in Planning Guidance regulates the performance of the Council's planning function, principally as it applies to applications for planning permission, but also to the other areas within the terms of reference of the Planning Control Committee pertaining to development control (e.g. enforcement, listed buildings, conservation areas, tree preservation orders, etc).

A draft updated version of the Probity in Planning Guidance had been circulated to Members of the Planning Committee for any comments which could include possible deletions or additions. The governance process resulted in the updated version of Guidance submitted to this Committee.

A discussion took place on some of the reasons for amendments being undertaken. Members of the Committee would send any suggested comments to the Clerk before formal approval at Council in May.

It was agreed:-

That the report be noted.

6 CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Jacqui Dennis reported as part of the annual review of the constitution a forward plan item for this Committee had been an ethical governance review, the report attached to the agenda pack sought Members agreement to develop a revised Code of Corporate Governance which would be considered and approved by this committee.

Details of the work involved were detailed in the report attached to the agenda pack.

The Code was underpinned by the seven key principles set out in the current revised framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

The Monitoring Officer would bring an updated report to a future meeting of the Standards Committee.

It was agreed:-

That the report be noted and that a Code of Corporate Governance would be prepared for review by Standards Committee.

7 URGENT BUSINESS

No urgent business was reported.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Standards Committee meeting was provisionally scheduled to take place at 6.00pm on Tuesday the 1st July at Bury Town Hall.

COUNCILLOR K HUSSAIN
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.10pm)