

Minutes of: **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 1st July 2025

Present: Councillor N Bayley (in the Chair)
Councillors A Booth, R Gold, M Hayes, K Hussain, D Quinn, T Rafiq,
T Tariq 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 or press were present at the meeting.

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors J Hook and M Rahimov.
Council T. Tariq acted as a substitute representative for Councillor Rahimov.

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 3rd April 2025 were approved as a correct record.

4 STANDARDS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The 2025-2026 terms of reference for the Standards Committee were attached to the agenda for reference purposes ahead of the forthcoming municipal year of meetings.

A Member enquired if a serving Police Officer could become a Councillor.

It was agreed:

That the terms of reference be noted.

5 STANDARDS COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2025-2026

The 2025-2026 draft work programme for the Standards Committee was attached to the agenda for reference purposes ahead of the forthcoming municipal year of meetings.

Members commented that the Council was committed to the LGA and the family friendly rights for elected Members including maternity and paternity leave. Jacqui Dennis, Director Law & Governance reported that a policy had already been agreed by full Council to cover this family friendly policy.

The February 2026 meeting had not had items allocated as there may be items arise over the coming months that are appropriate to be listed on the last agenda of the year.

A discussion took place on the Member development programme and this could be included as a future item for circulation and comments before sign off.

It was agreed:-

That the items on the draft work programme be approved.

6 CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Jacqui Dennis reported at the April 2025 meeting, Standards Committee requested that a Code of Corporate Governance was drafted and returned to this committee early in the next municipal year for comments.

Members were asked to review the draft guide and provide comments on the document attached to the agenda pack.

Corporate Governance is the term used to describe how the council manages its affairs and its relationship with the community, colleagues, customers, and partners. The code promotes the values of the Authority upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour, ethical standards and legal compliance.

The Code is a document which is reviewed annually and reflected any governance changes made during that time period.

Craig Ainsworth commented if section A could strengthen the role of Standards within it. Councillor Hayes asked for clarity on the Caldicott Guardian and an explanation was provided.

It was proposed that the views of this Committee and the Executive Leadership Team are obtained prior to a final draft returning to this Committee for its approval.

It was agreed:-

That the report and draft guide be noted with comments welcome to be submitted.

7 REMOTE MEETING ATTENDANCE & PROXY VOTING UPDATE

Jacqui Dennis reported that following time limited Covid remote attendance permissions that expired in 2021, local authority meetings have been required to be held in a single, specified, physical 'place'.

On the 24th October 2024, the government published a consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings. The consultation closed on the 19th December 2024 and received 5,844 responses. The consultation sought views on the practical implications of allowing remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings.

The multiple-choice responses to each question were analysed and figures broken down in the report.

The government was of the view that in-person authority meetings remain vital for local democracy, but that hybrid and remote attendance, and proxy voting, will enable local authorities in England to develop more modern, accessible, and flexible working practices.

The government would work collaboratively with the relevant sectors to develop clear and supportive guidance in relation to both remote attendance and proxy voting policies.

Members commented on possible arrangements including a hybrid option if they were unable to attend a meeting in person but they would require the correct ICT equipment.

Craig Ainsworth felt that it could give rise to more complaints with careful online monitoring required.

It was agreed:-

That the Committee noted the update and a further report be produced once more information was released from Central Government.

8 URGENT BUSINESS

No urgent business was reported.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Standards Committee meeting was provisionally scheduled to take place at 6.00pm on Thursday the 18th September 2025 at Bury Town Hall.

COUNCILLOR N BAYLEY
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.00pm)

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