

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held at The Jeffrey Room, The Guildhall, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Monday, 3 December 2018 at 5:00 pm.

George Candler
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES
2. MINUTES
3. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
5. CO OPTEE (INDEPENDENT MEMBER) - VACANCY
The Standards Committee to confirm the appointment process – One Co Optee (Independent Member).
6. TRAINING STRATEGY
The Standards Committee to review its updated Training Strategy for all Members of the Council in relation to ethical and governance matters and specific training for Members of the Standards Committee
7. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY
8. CODE OF CONDUCT ARRANGEMENTS COMPLAINTS
The Standards Committee to consider a report regarding complaints received under the Arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils.
9. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED
10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS
THE CHAIR TO MOVE:
"THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BE EXCLUDED FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE IS LIKELY TO BE DISCLOSURE TO THEM OF SUCH CATEGORIES OF EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED BY SECTION 100(I) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS LISTED AGAINST SUCH ITEMS OF BUSINESS BY REFERENCE TO THE APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH OF SCHEDULE 12A TO SUCH ACT."

Public Participation

Members of the public may address the Committee on any non-procedural matter listed on this agenda. Addresses shall not last longer than three minutes. Committee members may then ask questions of the speaker. No prior notice is required prior to the commencement of the meeting of a request to address the Committee.

Agenda Item 2

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 17 September 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Patel (Chair); Councillor Oldham (Deputy Chair); Councillors Bottwood, Kilbride and Marriott and Parish Councillor Lewis (co optee) and Parish Councillor Hook (co optee)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Eales, B Markham, and Russell and Kim Holland (Co Optee.) and Roger Rumsey (Co Optee.)

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2018 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT ARRANGEMENTS COMPLAINTS

The Standards Committee received a report detailing statistics in relation to Code of Conduct Arrangements complaints.

The Standards Committee discussed the complaints listed.

RESOLVED That:

- (1) The statistical data in relation to the number of complaints received and dealt with is noted.
- (2) Statistical data in relation to the number of complaints received and dealt with is presented to the Committee at each meeting.

6. TRAINING STRATEGY - ETHICAL AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS

The Standards Committee reviewed its Training Strategy noting the training listed. Training from the Strategy would commence in October 2018.

It was suggested that as Parish Councils are invited to attend training sessions that "Parish Councillors" is included in the Training Strategy.

AGREED: 1) That the Training Strategy is noted and it will be further reviewed in September 2019.

2) That "Parish Councillors" is included within the Training Strategy.

7. ETHICAL AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS TRAINING

The Standards Committee was reminded of the first modules of training that would be

delivered in October 2018. They would be delivered by an external trainer and would cover:

Module One

The Code of Conduct and local arrangements for case handling. This would look at both 'behavioural' aspects of the Code and rules around registration and declaration of interests. The Trainers will use real case examples.

Module Two

An introduction to Local Authorities as corporate bodies, the constitution and principles of decision making; member - officer roles and working; and the roles of the statutory officers

It was noted that all Councillors, co optees and Parish Councillors had been invited to attend the training. Disappointment was conveyed that just two Parish Councillors had booked onto the training sessions.

Details of the training was noted.

8. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 5:07 pm

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Councillor Training Strategy – Ethical and Governance Matters

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Council; for assisting Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct and for promoting high ethical standards within Parish Councils. Within its terms of reference the Standards Committee can also undertake any action that improves, promotes, safeguards and facilitates the highest standard of probity and ethical conduct by the Council, its Members and Officers and advise the Council on ethical aspects of good governance standards for public life.
- 1.2 Members of the Standards Committee may also be required to participate directly in the process of dealing with allegations that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct if a Hearing Panel of the Committee is established following an investigation into an alleged breach of the Code.
- 1.3 It is important that individual Members of the Standards Committee are themselves adequately trained in ethical and governance matters to enable them to act as effective Members of the Committee.
- 1.4 Training in ethical and governance matters is a key aspect of Councillor Development for all 45 Members of Northampton Borough Council. **Where relevant, Parish Councillors will be invited to attend training.**

2 Key Objectives of the Councillor Training Strategy – Ethical and Governance Matters

- To identify and provide the training required by Members of the Standards Committee on ethical and governance matters.
- To raise the profile of the Council's ethics and governance agenda and the work of the Standards Committee.
- To improve understanding amongst Members about ethical and governance matters and their responsibilities, to contribute to the strengthening of the Council's overall governance framework.

3 Outline Training Programme for the Municipal year 2017/2018

- 3.1 The following ethical and governance training and development topics for Councillors have been identified:

- Members' Code of Conduct (including consideration of the Nolan 'principles of public life') and the Arrangements for investigating alleged breaches of the Code
- Disclosure and Registration of Interests
- Gifts and Hospitality
- Organisational Ethics and Culture
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework including Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- Decision Making
- The CIPFA International Framework - Good Governance in the Public Sector
- Such other ethical or governance matters identified by the Council's Monitoring Officer [in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee] from time to time.

3.2 Some of the above topics could be delivered together in one Member Development session.

3.3 It is envisaged that some of the training topics will be delivered by internal Officers of the Council and others will be delivered by external training providers.

4 Monitoring

4.1 Monitoring of the effectiveness of the Councillor Training – Ethical and Governance Matters will take place by form of feedback questionnaires. The findings from the questionnaires will be analysed.

5 Review

5.1 Councillor Training Strategy – Ethical and Governance Matters will be reviewed annually.

5.2 Councillor Training – Ethical and Governance Matters will be a key component of the Councillor Induction Programme

Appendices: 0



STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Effectiveness of the Council's Whistleblowing Arrangements
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Committee Meeting Date:	3 December 2018
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to provide the Committee with an update on the effectiveness of the whistleblowing arrangements in place at the Council.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the information provided in relation to the effectiveness of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background and Issues

- 3.1.1 It was agreed at the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 17 September 2018 that information relating to the effectiveness of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting in December.
- 3.1.2 The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure was approved at the meeting of the Council held on 19 June 2017. Since this date the following activities have taken place:
- The Employee's Code of Conduct was updated in December 2017 and makes reference to the Council's whistleblowing arrangements.
 - ExpoLink were appointed as the external provider of the whistleblowing hotline in January 2018. Reports can be made by using either the dedicated hotline phone number or online via this [link](#).

- A dedicated mobile phone number has been implemented and can be used by staff to report concerns internally. This phone is held by the Governance and Risk team.
- The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure was launched via a series of posts on the intranet.
- Posters setting out the contact details for ExpoLink have been placed around the Guildhall.
- A verbal update was provided at a manager's session, with those attending advised to ensure that their staff were aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.
- Whistleblowing hotline wallet cards were also issued to all staff with their payslips in June 2018.

3.1.3 Monthly Whistleblowing hotline summary reports are received from Expolink. As at 31 October 2018, no calls had been received via the whistleblowing hotline.

3.1.4 As at 8 November 2018, the Governance and Risk Manager had received one whistleblowing compliant via email. This is in the process of being investigated.

3.2 Choices

3.2.1 Members are asked to note the information provided.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 This report does not have any direct policy implications.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 This report does not have any direct resource implications.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 This report does not have any direct legal implications.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Not applicable.

4.6 Other Implications

4.6.1 None.

5. Background Papers

5.1 None.

Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer

Appendices: 0



STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	STATISTICS – CODE OF CONDUCT ARRANGEMENTS COMPLAINTS
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Committee Meeting Date:	3 December 2018
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to provide the Committee with information by reporting on the statistics regarding the number of complaints received and dealt with under the “*Arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members’ Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils*”.
- 1.2 At its meeting of 18 December 2017, the Standards Committee requested that statistical information be presented to each meeting of the Committee; with updates on the live complaints, new complaints and complaints that have been actioned and closed since the last meeting.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the statistics in relation to the number of complaints received, and dealt with, under the Code of Conduct Arrangements.
- 2.2 That statistical data in relation to the number of complaints received and dealt with, in respect of the Code of Conduct Arrangements is presented to each meeting of the Committee.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background and Issues

- 3.1.1 It was resolved at the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 17 July 2017 that information regarding the number of complaints received and dealt with under the Code of Conduct Arrangements would be presented to the

Committee at its next meeting in October. This information was presented to the Committee in October.

3.1.2 The Committee requested that the data presented to it was elaborated upon to include further statistics regarding the complaints, such as the time taken to resolve the complaints and the outcomes of each complaint.

3.1.3 Further information was provided to the Standards Committee at its meetings in December 2017, March 2018, June 2018 and September 2018.

3.1.4 The data in paragraph 3.1.5 below relates to all Code of Conduct complaints that are still live, have been closed since the September 2018 Committee meeting or have been received since the September 2018 Committee papers were published.

3.1.5

a) Complaints against a Parish Councillor

1) Complaint received on 29 May 2018

This file is open.

An initial assessment made by the Solicitor, on behalf of the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person, was held on 24 July 2018. The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that the complaint would be referred to an investigation. An Investigator has been appointed and the investigation is underway

2) Complaint received on 22 September 2018

The file is now closed.

An initial assessment made by the Solicitor, on behalf of the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person, was held on 8 November 2018. The initial assessment could not be held until this date due to the availability of the Independent Persons.

The outcome of the initial assessment was, that there is to be an alternative action of resolution. The subject Member has been asked to provide a written apology to the complainant and to attend a Charing Skills course for Councillors.

b) Complaint against a Borough Councillor

1) Complaint received on 25 March 2017

As reported to the December, March and June 2018 meetings of the Standards Committee, this file is still open.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that the complaint would be held in abeyance pending the outcome of a separate investigation.

2) Two complaints received on 14 May 2018

This file is still open.

Two complaints about the same Councillor were received on 14 May 2018 and the initial assessments of the complaints took place on 5 June 2018. The outcome of the initial assessment was provided to the Committee at its June meeting, which was, that there is to be an alternative form of resolution.

The meeting between the subject Member and complainant has been scheduled.

3) Complaint received on 28 August 2018

This file is open.

A complaint about a Borough Councillor was received on 28 August 2018. Pre-assessment determined that as the Councillor had provided a response to the complainant the file was closed.

The file was closed on 14 September 2018.

3.2 Choices

3.2.1 Members are asked to note the information provided.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 This report does not have any direct policy implications.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 This report does not have any direct resource implications.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 Complaints received are dealt with in accordance with the *Arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils* which were adopted pursuant to the Localism Act 2011.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Not applicable.

4.6 Other Implications

4.6.1 None.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Complaints received in respect of the Arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils.

Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer