

Standards Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Thursday, 11 November 2021 in Committee Room 2, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Standards Committee members present:

Councillors Catterall, B Birch, Sir R Atkins, Gerrard, Swales and Orme

Apologies for absence:

None

Other councillors present:

None

Officers present:

Mary Grimshaw, Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
Jane Collier, Human Resources Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Duncan Jowitt, Democratic Services Officer

The Independent Person, Barry Parsonage also attended the meeting. No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

13 Election of Chairman

Councillor Sue Catterall was elected as Chairman of the Standards Committee for the municipal year 2021/22

14 Election of Vice Chairman

Councillor Phil Orme was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the municipal year 2021/22.

15 Declarations of Interest

None.

16 Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting of 18 March 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

17 **Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code of Conduct for Members**

The Monitoring Officer (MO) submitted a report presenting for approval the Local Government Association (“LGA”) Model Code of Conduct for Members (“the model code”) with amendments as set out in Appendix 1 of the report. If approved, the committee could either recommend to Council that the revised Code of Conduct be adopted or consider whether to set up a working group to further review Wyre’s Code in line with the model code as suggested at previous meetings.

The MO expressed disappointment that the government had not reintroduced sanctions allowing for potential suspension of councillors for bad behaviour and the Vice Chairman asked that the Democratic Services Officer email to all Wyre councillors a petition that was currently in circulation asking the government to introduce sanctions.

Decision

The committee decided unanimously that a working group would not be required and to recommend the adoption of the revised Code to Council with the addition of a proviso to refer to or seek advice of the Independent Person.

The committee also agreed to recommend that all town and parish councils in the borough adopt Wyre’s Code and to circulate the petition about sanctions to all Wyre councillors as suggested.

18 **Current Complaints: Summary**

The MO submitted a schedule that summarised the complaints of alleged breaches of the Council’s Code of Conduct completed since the previous report to the Standards Committee. The Deputy MO provided further information about the statistical format of the schedule and the committee discussed the new format at length, requesting that the MO include more detail as “the misuse of social media” gave no indication as to the nature of such misuse that had prompted the complaint.

Decision

The committee **noted** the report and asked that the MO, Deputy MO and Democratic Services Officer investigate practice elsewhere and how complaints are reported at Standards Committee meetings of other authorities and consider what further information might be provided in future without prejudicing any hearings that may become necessary.

19 **Dates of future meetings**

Noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Standards Committee would be held at 6pm on Thursday 17 March 2022 and that the meetings for 2022-2023 have been scheduled for 16 June 2022, 10 November 2022 and 16 March 2023.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.44 pm.

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