

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee of Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday, 10 November 2025 at 14:00 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:-

R. Jaffray in the Chair

Councillors Vicky Wapplington (Vice-Chair), Louise Fox, Donna Hales, Duncan Haywood and Clive Moesby.

Officers:- Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer), Angelika Kaufhold (Governance and Civic Manager) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

### **STA41-25/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Gilbody.

### **STA42-25/26 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to be considered at the meeting.

### **STA43-25/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

### **STA44-25/26 MINUTES**

Moved by Councillor Fox and seconded by Councillor Haywood

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

### **STA45-25/26 ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN 2024/25 AND ANNUAL HOUSING OMBUDSMAN REPORT INCLUDING SELF ASSESSMENT 2024/25**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Monitoring Officer which provided information relating to the Annual Letter received from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) 2024/25 and the Housing Ombudsman Annual Report and Self-Assessment submission.

During 2024/25 the LG&SCO had received nine enquiries and complaints and of these seven were closed after initial enquiries and two were not for the Ombudsman to investigate.

Members commented that it was positive that there had been no LG&SCO formal

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complaints investigations during 2024/25.

Moved by Councillor Moesby and seconded by Councillor Hales

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Letter from the LG&SCO and the Annual

Submission Housing Ombudsman Report and Self-Assessment 2024/25 be noted.

### **STA46-25/26 COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS 25/26 - 1ST APRIL 2025 TO 30TH JUNE 2025**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Monitoring Officer which provided information and detailed the performance against the Council's performance indicators relating:-

- the customer service standards for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025;
- the management of complaints and customer requests;
- the number of compliments, comments and complaints; and
- to make Members aware of performance and improvements in relation to its Customer Service Standards and the effective management of complaints.

Moved by Councillor Hales and seconded by Councillor Haywood

**RESOLVED** that the overall performance on Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints be noted.

### **STA47-25/26 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Monitoring Officer relating to the Council's Whistleblowing Policy. The Council was committed to fostering a climate of openness and transparency by adopting a Whistleblowing Policy to support individuals in the workplace so they would not feel victimised, harassed or suffer any reprisals if they raised concerns about wrongdoing within the organisation. The Council was committed to updating policies on a regular basis to ensure they were fit for purpose with the last review of the Whistleblowing Policy having taken place in January 2025.

In accordance with the Policy, the Monitoring Officer had overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the Policy, maintain a record of concerns raised and outcomes as well as reporting to Council on instances of Whistleblowing.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that a motion to Council to review the Whistleblowing Policy had been considered on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025. Council was informed that the Policy was reviewed every year by the Committee and confirmed it was last considered and approved as fit for purpose in January 2025. The Monitoring Officer had sought feedback but not received anything from the Councillor who had submitted the Motion, as to any potential areas where changes in the policy may be required.

There was a requirement for the Monitoring Officer to report instances of Whistleblowing to Council and this would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee in February 2026.

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Once the Whistleblowing Policy was approved the Communications Team would be asked to post details of the policy on the Council's intranet (Eric) and remind staff of the policy and procedure.

Moved by Councillor Haywood and seconded by Councillor Hales

**RESOLVED** that the Standards Committee agreed that the Whistleblowing Policy was fit for purpose.

### **STA48-25/26      COMPLAINTS UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Monitoring Officer relating to the Council's members code of conduct process and an update on the number of complaints received.

Members attention was drawn to the Appendix 1 which included the sixteen complaints received as follows:

- Five complaints were under investigation or due to be investigated.
- Three had resulted in councillors accepting they had breached the code and they had apologised to the complainant.
- Two councillors had resigned following receipt of the complaints and no further action was taken.
- The remainder of the complaints were not considered to be matters that fell under the jurisdiction of the member code of conduct complaints regime.
- Since publication of the agenda one further member complaint had been received.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the number of complaints received during the 2025 calendar year was higher than previous years with a number relating to the same parish/town councils.

Two additional new Independent Persons had been appointed at Council on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025 which had increased the number to three in total. Their role included being consulted and providing guidance to the Monitoring Officer on member code of conduct complaints.

There was no specific timescale for investigating code of conduct complaints but the preference was to complete these as quickly as possible. This was dependent on the nature and seriousness of the complaint but also staffing capacity.

Code of Conduct training was mandatory for councillors and the Monitoring Officer had previously offered to provide this to Parish and Town Councils. The Derbyshire Association for Local Government also provided similar training.

The update was noted.

### **STA49-25/26      WORK PROGRAMME 2025/2026**

Consideration was given to Work Programme for the Standards Committee for 2025/26 as presented by the Monitoring Officer.

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Noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on 9 February 2026.

The meeting concluded at 14:25 hours.