

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday, 9 February 2026 at 14:00 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:-

Councillor R. Jaffray in the Chair

Councillors Vicky Waplington (Vice-Chair), Justin Gilbody, Donna Hales, Duncan Haywood and Clive Moesby.

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

### **STA50-25/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Fox.

### **STA51-25/26 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

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

### **STA52-25/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

### **STA53-25/26 MINUTES**

Moved by Councillor Hales and seconded by Councillor Haywood

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

### **STA54-25/26 GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY ANNUAL REPORT 2025**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Monitoring Officer relating to the Gifts and Hospitality Annual Report 2025. A copy of the Council's protocol on gifts and hospitality was attached as Appendix 1 to the report with the register for the period January 2025 to December 2025 at Appendix 2.

Councillor Moesby suggested that it would be useful to send out a reminder to all Members in relation to the need to declare any gifts and hospitality received and potentially include it as part of training.

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there was no need for Councillor Haywood as Chair of Council to declare the hospitality he received as he attended civic engagements as a representative of the Council.

Moved by Councillor Hales and seconded by Councillor Gilbody  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **STA55-25/26 WHISTLEBLOWING ANNUAL REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Monitoring Officer relating to the Whistleblowing Policy Annual Report and highlighted that there had been two instances during 2025. It was confirmed that due to the need to maintain confidentiality the whistleblowing complaints had been anonymised so as not to reveal the identity of complainant or whom the complaint had been made against. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that this would also be reported to Council in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

Moved by Councillor Hales and seconded by Councillor Moesby  
**RESOLVED** that the instances of whistleblowing made during 2025 be noted and reported to Council.

### **STA56-25/26 CHANGE TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Monitoring which proposed that the Council's Constitution be updated to include a definition of the term "working day". The usual interpretation of the term "working day" was Monday to Friday excluding weekends and bank/public holidays as used in many pieces of legislation including the Companies Act 2006 and the Data Protection Act 2018 but also recognised by organisations such as ACAS and HMRC.

Moved by Councillor Gilbody and seconded by Councillor Haywood  
**RESOLVED** that Council be recommended to include a definition of the term "working day" to mean Monday to Friday excluding weekends and bank/public holidays.

### **STA57-25/26 GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE STANDARDS FRAMEWORK**

Consideration was given to a report of the Monitoring Officer which outlined the responses to the Government consultation on reforms to the standards and conduct framework. The stated intention of the reforms was to ensure that misconduct was dealt with promptly and fairly, whilst strengthening public confidence in local democratic institutions.

The key themes of the Government's response included:

- The role of the standards framework in supporting a positive organisational culture within local authorities with elected members expected to demonstrate leadership through their behaviour.

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- Acknowledgement of the concerns raised of persistent poor behaviour, including bullying or intimidating conduct which undermined effective governance.
- That whilst acknowledging the importance of maintaining a space for robust political debate and expression of strongly held views within local democracy this should not cross the line into toxic or intimidating behaviour.
- The use of social media and behaviour within these forums which could have a significant impact on public trust and on relationships within councils.

The Government's proposed changes included:

- To legislate for a mandatory minimum code of conduct for all local authorities in England which would embed the Seven Principles of Public Life and require members to co-operate with standards investigations.
- Stronger sanctions for breaches of the Code were proposed such as suspension for serious breaches, withholding of allowances and potential for disqualification if you are suspended twice within a five year period.
- A right to review decisions which applies to both complainants and the councillor accused of the breach as well as a national independent appeals function.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that he would provide updates to the Standards Committee as Government progressed its proposals as well as reporting the Government's response to Council to ensure all Members were informed.

Moved by Councillor Hales and seconded by Councillor Gilbody  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **STA58-25/26 MEMBER COMPLAINTS - UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the Complaints Update report presented by the Monitoring Officer. The report highlighted the member complaints received during 2025 and included the following updates:

- 03/02 – the investigation has been completed and discussions were taking place for an informal resolution.
- 17/01 – following an initial assessment the Monitoring Officer was satisfied that the Councillor was not acting in an official capacity.
- 24/01 – there was no interest to declare in this case.

In response to questions, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that:

- There had been a lot of complaints during 2025 many relating to Parish Councillors.

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

- The more complex or sensitive cases would be externally investigated by solicitors or Monitoring Officers from other Local Authorities.
- Members' Code of Conduct training would be offered again soon.

Moved by Councillor Hales and seconded by Councillor Moesby  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **STA59-25/26 RIPA ANNUAL REPORT**

Consideration was given to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) update report presented by the Monitoring Officer. Feedback had been received following the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office inspection of the Council's arrangements for dealing with covert surveillance. Whilst the IPCO found the Policy was a useful and comprehensive document some amendments as detailed in the report.

Moved by Councillor Haywood and seconded by Councillor Hales  
**RESOLVED** that (1) the proposed changes to the RIPA policy be approved; and

(2) that the report be noted.

### **STA60-25/26 WORK PROGRAMME 2025/2026**

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

Noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

The meeting concluded at 14:26 hours.