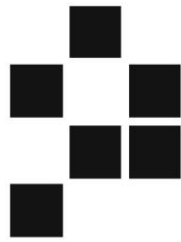


Chairs Announcement

Please note that members of the public and the press are now allowed by law to film, audio record, take photographs, blog or tweet at this meeting. I would ask at this point if anyone is intending to film the meeting? I would ask anyone who is recording to avoid any disruption of the meeting and to avoid filming members of the public. If you do film members of the public there is the potential for civil action against you by anyone who has not given their permission to be filmed.

We are not expecting a fire drill, so in the event of the fire alarm sounding, please leave the building as quickly as possible. The Governance Services Officer will direct you to the appropriate exit and assembly point.



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

**Ethical Standards and Member
Development Committee**

**Friday, 8 December, 2017 at 2.30 pm
in Committee Room 1 at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Agenda

(Open to Public and Press)

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Members to declare any interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.
3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November, 2017, as a correct record.
4. Allegations Update.

J Britton
Chief Executive

Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury,
West Midlands



Distribution:

Councillor Lewis (Chair)

Councillor S Crumpton (Vice-Chair);

Councillors E M Giles, P Hughes, Sandars, Shackleton, Trow and Underhill.

Mr Tomkinson and Ms Williams [Independent Persons].

**Agenda prepared by Trisha Newton
Democratic Services Unit
Tel No: 0121 569 3193
E-mail: trisha_newton@sandwell.gov.uk**

This document is available in large print on request to the above telephone number. The document is also available electronically on the Committee Management Information System which can be accessed from the Council's web site on www.sandwell.gov.uk

Please note that this meeting may be filmed by members of the public and press, and may be filmed by the Council for live or subsequent broadcast on the Council's web site.

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Apologies

To receive any apologies from members

Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

**Minutes of the Ethical Standards
and Member Development Committee**

**3rd November, 2017 at 2.00 pm
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

- Present:** Councillor Lewis (Chair);
Councillor S Crumpton (Vice-Chair);
Councillors E M Giles, P Hughes, Sandars,
Shackleton, Trow and Underhill.
- Observer:** Mr R Tomkinson (Independent Person).
- Apology:** Ms J Williams (Independent Person).

14/17 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee, held on 8th September 2017, be confirmed as a correct record.

15/17 **Proposed Elected Member Development Programme**

The Committee considered proposals for a new Elected Member Development Programme.

The Council, in the past few years, had invested in member development and had successfully achieved the Member Development Charter accreditation from West Midlands Employers. However, over recent years, the subjective development model underpinning member development had shifted to a more objective one.

Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

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The revised Member Development Programme had been designed to assist members to lead their own development and would ensure that they developed/acquired the requisite knowledge, experience and skills to succeed in their various councillor roles.

The Council sought to build upon its successes as a member-led Council and recognised that to do so all elected members had an important role to play. It was recognised that elected members could be appointed to various roles during their period of office (whether one or over several terms). The Member Development Programme was purposely designed to facilitate discussions and debate with all elected members and would specifically consider the roles of Chair, Vice Chair, committee member and representatives on an outside body.

Elected members had undertaken annual personal development plans and many undertook a wide range of training and other forms of development courses. However, there was a need to ensure the needs of members were better understood so the development programme was clearly aligned to those needs and delivered in a manner that members found engaging, thought-provoking and informative.

A joined-up Member Development Programme had therefore been developed to engage all members so that their needs could be properly examined and met. The programme would challenge and inform members so they were equipped to meet the requirements of the 2030 Vision.

The programme would be supported by facilitators, member peers (as far as possible) and use of member networks locally, regionally and nationally. Importantly, it encouraged elected members to share their expertise, local knowledge and experience to inform the whole development programme.

The development programme itself would follow a four-stage process:-

- initial discussion (scene setting);
- in-depth discussions (focus on knowledge, expertise, skills, support needs);
- focused workshops (key strategic and important issues discussed, i.e. localism, commercialisation, partnerships, etc);
- personal development plan.

Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

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The process enabled sufficient engagement with all members and allowed members to be introduced to different ways of thinking, by working in a structured and informed way; this engagement was considered critical to the success of the programme.

The review of member development would also include a refresh of elected member induction arrangements.

To assist with the development and implementation of the Member Development Programme, it was proposed that a working group be established so that discussion and amendments to the programme could be agreed. Given the subjective nature of the programme, adopting this agile approach would ensure a bespoke and fit for purpose programme was achieved.

The Committee encouraged other professional techniques, such as team building exercises, to enable members to have a greater self-understanding of their strengths.

The Committee also identified the requirement to redefine job roles for members, in particular the role of Vice Chairs.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Elected Member Development Programme be approved;
- (2) that a Member Development Working Group be established, with Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix 1, consisting of Councillors Lewis, Trow and Underhill;
- (3) that the Director – Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Working Group, be authorised to procure external support considered necessary to support and facilitate the Elected Member Development Programme.

Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee
3rd November, 2017

16/17

Appointment of an Independent Member to the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, arrangements must be put in place for the appointment by the Council of at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought and taken into account by the Council before it made a decision on an allegation against an elected member that it had decided to investigate. The Independent Person's views may be sought by a member or co-opted member of the Council if that person's behaviour was the subject of an allegation, and may also be sought by the Council in relation to an allegation it had not yet decided to investigate.

The Council had decided to have three Independent Persons. Following a resignation, there was currently one vacancy. In terms of a third member, to enable statutory processes to be followed a recruitment exercise would be carried out.

The Committee noted the role description, selection criteria and timeline for the process and agreed that the Leader of the Council and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee would interview the candidates.

Resolved that the process to appoint an Independent Person to the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee be approved.

17/17

Allegations Update

The Committee received a verbal update on complaints received in respect of member conduct.

(Meeting ended at 3.02 pm)

| |
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| Contact Officer: Trisha Newton Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3193 |
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MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference

Purpose

To support the development, implementation and delivery of a revised Elected Member Development Programme.

To support the accreditation process in relation to the West Midlands Member Development Charter.

Membership

Chairperson of the Standards and Member Development Committee (or his nominee).

Two other Members of the Standards and Member Development Committee (or their nominees)

Quorate and Meetings

At least two Members of the Working Group (inc. their nominees).

Meetings shall be held as required.

Decision-making

To provide a steer in relation to the development, implementation and delivery of the said Programme including the accreditation of the Member Development Charter.

To provide direction in respect of the details, content and methodology of the said Programme.

To agree any additional costs of developing and implementing the development programme.

To agree the final version of the Member Development Programme including methodology, content and implementation.

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Voting

By majority vote with the Chairperson or his nominee having a casting vote.

Access to Information Rules

The Working Group is not a constitutional meeting of the council or a sub-committee of the Standards and Member Development Committee and as such is not subject to the Access to Information Rules.

Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

8 December 2017

Allegations Update

1. Summary Statement

1.1 The Standards Committee receives reports from time to time on complaints received in respect of member conduct and the progress and outcome of consideration of these complaints.

1.2 This report provides a brief summary of updated information on current complaints in accordance with the Council's arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct matters.

Further details are attached for your information

2. Recommendation

2.1 That details of complaints received in relation to member conduct and the progress and outcome of consideration of these complaints be noted.

Surjit Tour
Director – Monitoring Officer

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1 There are no resource implications arising directly as a result of this report.

4. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 4.1 The new standards arrangements are set out in chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011, and in secondary legislation made under the Act, particularly in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

5. Implications for the Council's Scorecard Priorities

- 5.1 There are no implications for the Council's Scorecard priorities arising directly from this report. The increased awareness of the work of the Standards Committee will help promote higher standards by enabling better decision-making.

6. Background Details

- 6.1 Appendix 1 contains brief details of complaints received and dealt with.

Summary Schedule of Complaints

Please note that the details below are allegations which have yet to be determined.

Complaints determined to go to a standards hearing

1. Case reference MC/06/0616 Subject Member: Cllr Mahboob Hussain

Allegations relating to sale of toilets blocks and waiver of parking tickets.

Councillor Hussain has been unable to attend a Standards Hearing in relation to these matters, most recently at the end of November 2017, due to medical reasons. A further hearing has been arranged for 3 days commencing on 8 January 2018.

2. Case reference MC/03/0517 Subject Member: Cllr Ian Jones

Allegations relating to the removal of the sale of a plot of land from an already arranged and publicised auction when a Cabinet Member.

Standards Hearing arranged for 1 December 2017.

Allegations currently under investigation

3. Case reference MC/02/0517

Allegations concerning community events at Hill Top Park and Radcliffe Park and the indication that the Councillor may have included the names of council officers on official documents as organiser of an event without their knowledge; Alleged failure of Councillor to register interests as Vice Chair of Hill Top Community Development Association, and failure to follow appropriate council procedures in arranging the event.

The subject Councillors have been unable to attend interviews with the Investigator due to medical reasons.

Investigation into allegations is therefore still ongoing.

4. Case reference MC/05/0717

Allegations concerning land sales to Councillors when displaced from their homes by a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). In addition it is further alleged that housing was allocated to family members.

An Investigator has been appointed and the investigation is ongoing.

5. Case references MC/07/1017, MC/08/1017, MC/09/1117

Three complaints including a self-referral from one Councillor concerning alleged “Whats app” texts published on a local blog site entitled “In the Public Domain”.

These allegations include disclosure of confidential information and inappropriate and disparaging references to individuals.

In accordance with the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints, the council’s independent person has been consulted and a formal decision to proceed to investigate will be made within the next 7-10 days.

Matters recently concluded

6. Case Reference MC/03/0517

Allegation relating to removal of the sale of a plot of land from an already arranged auction and subsequent sale to a family member.

The matter has not proceeded beyond investigation stage due to insufficient evidence to identify a breach of the Code of Conduct.