

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

**8th December, 2017 at 2.30 pm
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Lewis (Chair);
Councillor S Crumpton (Vice-Chair);
Councillors E M Giles, Shackleton, Trow and
Underhill.

Observer: Ms J Williams (Independent Person).

Apologies: Councillors P Hughes and Sandars;
Mr R Tomkinson (Independent Person).

18/17 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee, held on 3rd November 2017, be confirmed as a correct record.

19/17 **Allegations Update**

The Committee received details of complaints received in relation to member conduct and the progress on the complaints as follows:-

Case MC/06/0616 – Councillor Mahboob Hussain

The Councillor had been unable to attend a standards hearing due to medical reasons. A hearing had been arranged for three days, commencing on 8th January 2018.

Case MC/03/0517 – Councillor Ian Jones

This matter was reported to a standards hearing on 1st December 2017. The hearing had been adjourned to enable Councillor I Jones to appoint a legal representative to prepare his case.

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Case MC/02/0517 – Hill Top Park

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

The subject Councillors had been unable to attend interviews with the investigator due to medical reasons. Investigation into the allegations was ongoing.

Case MC/05/0717 – Land Sales

Allegations concerning land sales to Councillors when displaced from their homes by a Compulsory Purchase Order. It was also alleged that housing was allocated to family members.

An investigator had been appointed and the investigation was ongoing.

Case MC/07/1017, MC/08/1017 and 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 included 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 had been consulted and a formal decision on whether to proceed to investigate would be made within the seven to ten days.

Case MC/03/0517 – Sale of Plot of Land

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

The Committee was also advised that two additional complaints had been received and an update would be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

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The Director – Monitoring Officer advised that there would be an annual review of the Code of Conduct and a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee. It was proposed that a working group would be set up to progress the matter.

(Meeting ended at 3.10 pm)

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