

# Minutes of the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

4<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 3.30pm

**Present:** Councillor Ahmed (Vice Chair);  
Councillors Bostan, Dhallu, Horton, P Hughes and Mabena.

**Observer:** Mr John Tew (Independent Person).

**Officers:** Surjit Tour – Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer; Elaine Newsome – Service Manager – Democracy; Phil Challoner – Civic and Members Services Manager; Trisha Newton – Senior Democratic Services Officer.

## 43/20 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hevican and Simms and Mr Phillips, Independent Person.

## 44/20 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were declared.

## 45/20 **Minutes**

Subject to the inclusion of Councillor P Hughes' objection to appointments to the Committee being made by Emergency Committee, the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.



**Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee**  
**4<sup>th</sup> December, 2020**

46/20      **Matter of Urgency**

There were no additional items of business to consider.

47/20      **Review of Member Code of Conduct/Arrangements –  
Standards Working Group Update**

The Standards Working Group had met twice since the last meeting of the Committee and had given consideration to the methodology/timeline for the review of the Member Code of Conduct/Arrangements.

In 2018, the Committee on Standards in Public Life announced a review of ethical standards in local government. The report into Local Government Ethical Standards was published in January 2019, which included a number of recommendations. The first recommendation of the report was that the Local Government Association should draft a model code of conduct. In response to this recommendation, LGA consultation had taken place on a draft Model Code of Conduct.

It was expected that the LGA Model Code of Conduct would be made available in the coming weeks and consideration had been given to a series of workshops/engagement sessions to take place to enable all elected members to provide feedback on the current Code, the LGA Model Code of Conduct and to form the basis of the Member Code of Conduct and Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints. The workshops were due to commence in early December and would also be accompanied by a survey.

In addition, the Committee on Standards in Public Life had provided some best practice recommendations to be taken into consideration. These had been considered by the Standards Working Group and the response which had been provided on how these are/will be addressed was provided. These recommendations would also be factored into the review of the Code of Conduct/Arrangements and the engagement sessions.

**Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee**  
**4<sup>th</sup> December, 2020**

48/20      **Update on Phase Two of the Member Development Programme including implementation the My Councillor Member Portal**

The Committee received an update on the progress of phase two of the Member Development Programme and how Members had been supported by virtual/on-line learning and development interventions during the current pandemic.

In addition, an update was provided on the My Councillor portal pilot which had been extended to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and estimated roll-out arrangements in 2021.

49/20      **Register of Members' Interests – Annual Review**

The work programme of the Committee provided for an annual review of the Register.

The statutory requirements relating to the Register of Members' Interests were set out in Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 and required the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a Register of Members' Interests, including the interests of co-opted members of the Council.

The Register was available for inspection at the Sandwell Council House upon a request being made to the Monitoring Officer and was also available for the public to view on the Council's website.

One to one meetings with the Monitoring Officer and senior legal staff had been offered to members. The Registers were periodically reviewed by the Monitoring Officer.

50/20      **Gifts and Hospitality**

No new entries had been made to the Gifts and Hospitality Register since the last meeting of the Committee.

**Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee**  
**4<sup>th</sup> December, 2020**

51/20      **Complaints Update**

The Committee received details of complaints received in relation to member conduct and the progress on the complaints.

Meeting ended at 4.34pm.