

## **ARTICLE 9 - STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **1. STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Council shall at the annual meeting establish a Standards Committee under Section 102 of the Local Government Act. Its composition shall be governed by proportionality and it shall be subject to the same requirements on confidential and exempt information as any other Committee.

### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

The Standards Committee shall comprise -

- ◆ Eight members of the Council (to include one member who is a Member of the Executive).
- ◆ Two town or parish councillors, representing town and parish councils in the District who shall be co-opted and non-voting members of the Committee. Current representatives have been appointed to 30th April 2016 or until such time as their Parish Council office expires if earlier.

The Independent Person (and deputy) shall be appointed to serve on the Committee for a term of three years from the date of their appointment as required under Section 28 (7) of the Localism Act. In the case of the current appointees – to 30th April 2016.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee will be elected by the Committee and the Chairman, or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairman should present the report of the Committee at Council meetings.

### **3. VALIDITY OF PROCEEDINGS**

Town or parish councillor representatives will be entitled to attend meetings as non-voting co-optees. The Independent Person (and deputy) can attend meetings of the Committee to observe proceedings but are not formally members of the Committee. The quorum for a meeting of the Committee is at least three members of the Council.

### **4. FUNCTIONS AND ROLE**

The Standards Committee will have the following functions and roles in respect of the District Council and its members and town and parish councils and their members -

- ◆ promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by members;
- ◆ assisting members and co-opted members to observe their authority's code of conduct;
- ◆ advising the Council on the adoption or revision of a Code of Conduct and monitoring the operation of the Code;
- ◆ advising, training or arranging to train members and co-opted members on matters relating to the Code;
- ◆ granting dispensations to District councillors and co-opted members from the requirements relating to interests in the Members' Code of Conduct;

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- ◆ consider reports arising from any investigation of alleged misconduct and to make a decision on the findings of the investigator;
- ◆ undertake hearings into alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct;
- ◆ determining appropriate sanctions or actions in response to breaches of the Code of Conduct;
- ◆ maintain an overview of dispensations granted to parish councillors from requirements relating to interests set out in their Code of Conduct;
- ◆ the exercise of the above in relation to parish councils in Huntingdonshire and members of those parish councils;
- ◆ to select candidates and make recommendations to Council on the appointment of independent persons.
- ◆ consider matters relating to the Council's Customer Feedback Procedure and the Local Government Ombudsman;
- ◆ consider the periodic electoral review and review District and Parish electoral arrangements including boundaries and other electoral matters relating to the powers of a Parish Council, number of Parish Councillors and new Parish Councils and Parish Wards.

The Standards Committee shall have the following other functions in respect of the District Council and its members -

- ◆ to formulate and recommend to the Council for adoption a Protocol for Member/Officer Relations and monitor the operation of the Protocol; and
- ◆ to adopt Codes of Conduct for Planning and Licensing and monitor the operation of the Codes.

### **5. SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Committee may appoint a Sub-Committee comprising three members to -

- ◆ consider reports from an investigator appointed to investigate an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct;
- ◆ to act as a Hearings Panel to consider determinations following an investigation on an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct;
- ◆ to consider urgent requests for dispensations from District Council members.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services shall be authorised to convene meetings of the appointed Sub-Committee when necessary.