

3 June 2021

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the **Standards Committee** will be held on **Friday, 11th June, 2021** in the **Council Chamber, Forde House, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 4XX** at **11.00 am**

PHIL SHEARS  
Managing Director

### **Membership:**

Councillors Bullivant, Connett, Evans, Nuttall, Peart and L Petherick

**Please Note:** The public can view the live streaming of the meeting at [Teignbridge District Council Webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#) with the exception where there are confidential or exempt items, which may need to be considered in the absence of the press and public.

## **A G E N D A**

### **Part I**

1. **Apologies**
2. **Election of Chair**  
To elect a Standards Committee Chair for 2021/22.
3. **Election of Vice-Chair**  
To elect a Standards Committee Vice-Chair for 2021/22.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

5. **Minutes**

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2021.

6. **Notice of Motion - Standards Committee process change**

To consider the Notice of Motion on the Standards Committee process changes submitted by Cllr Eden to Full Council on 22 April and referred from Executive to Standards Committee on 13 May 2021.

**Background provided by Cllr Eden to the Motion:**

This Council, as with the vast majority of Local Authorities operates a number of committees monitoring the work of the council and its officers and the political decisions of the administration.

Most Local Authorities, if not all, also have a process which holds councillors to account over failures to adhere to agreed standards, whether through the code of conduct or more generally through the Nolan Principles etc. In the majority of committees the minutes of the work and findings are made available for public viewing and posted onto the Council's website.

Standards committees, not only discuss standards, but are most often delivered as quasi-legal hearings with allegations 'investigated' and reported on, witnesses and statements included in the process.

The findings of the hearings cannot be challenged or appealed. Furthermore, the phrasing of the findings, even where so poorly written as to make no sense, cannot be corrected at the time of initial publication to the website and wider distribution.

It is only the Standards Committees decision that can have a bearing on the individual beyond the remit of the council or their duties as a councillor. Decisions made in a Hearing can impact the career and personal life of a Councillor significantly, financially and negatively. This is particularly true in a modern connected world. Minutes are posted on the website and distributed before the members of the committee have reviewed and agreed them increasing the risk of harm to a reputation that far exceeds the finding against the individual concerned.

This is the only committee that has that potential.

**Wording of Motion proposed by Cllr Eden:**

In light of that the proposed motion is as follows. This council resolves that

- 1) No minutes or decision notice from a Standards Hearing are published on the Council Website until all those present at the committee as members have reviewed them.
- 2) No minutes or decision notice from a Standard hearing should be distributed to any external body until the committee has seen debated and approved the minutes and decision notice.

- 3) Minutes should reflect the conclusion of the Investigation and not be used to repeat and re-frame accusations and allegations that are not proven (by the Investigating Officer) as the finding.
- 4) That this authority investigates the potential for seeking an appeal body to ensure natural justice can be delivered beyond the summary findings delivered currently.
- 5) All Investigating Officers to be taken through a due diligence process by Audit Scrutiny.
- 6) All Independent Persons to be taken through a due diligence process and their participation within the process reported to and assessed by the Audit Scrutiny committee.
- 7) (as it does for planning and training for committee members) all Standards Committee members to take appropriate training, in this case Unconscious Bias and Equalities training as part of councillor development – to be extended to the Monitoring officer, investigating officer and independent persons as a requirement for participation.
- 8) the Executive will investigate alternative Standards processes with the Senior Leadership Team, to ensure best quality and best value for money.

## 7. **Forward Plan**

To programme any further work.

If you would like this information in another format, please telephone 01626 361101 or e-mail [info@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:info@teignbridge.gov.uk)