

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Standards Committee held at the Council Offices,  
Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Monday, 16 October 2023 commencing  
at 2:00 pm**

## **Present:**

Tewkesbury Borough Council  
Members:

Councillor H J Bowman  
Councillor S R Dove  
Councillor E J MacTiernan (Chair)  
Councillor G M Porter (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor P E Smith  
Councillor M J Williams

Non-Voting Independent  
Person(s):

Martin Jauch  
Peter Kimber

## **ST.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

3.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.

## **ST.4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

4.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P D McLain.

## **ST.5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

5.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 24 January 2023 and took effect on 1 February 2023.

5.2 There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

## **ST.6 MINUTES**

6.1 The Minutes of the meetings held on 21 September 2022 and 17 May 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **ST.7 PROCEDURE FOR CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS AND INCREASE TO THE NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS AND PARISH COUNCILLORS ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

7.1 The report of the Monitoring Officer, circulated at Pages No. 6-8, set out a new procedure to deal with Code of Conduct complaints that presented potential breaches of the Members Code of Conduct and recommended increasing the number of independent persons and Parish Councillors on the Standards Committee. The Committee was asked to adopt the procedure for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints as set out at Paragraph 2.1 of the report and to recommend to Council that the number of independent persons on the Standards

Committee be increased from two to three and the number of Parish Councillors on the Standards Committee be increased from one to three.

7.2 The Monitoring Officer explained that the proposed procedure intended to involve members of the Standards Committee, including Parish Councillors, in assessing complaints and having a role at hearings which was where the work tended to be focused. When the Monitoring Officer received a Code of Conduct complaint, it was intended they would share it with the independent persons and consider their view on the complaint. If the complaint was thought to have substance, an Assessment Panel would be convened comprising three Standards Committee members to consider the complaint at a confidential, informal meeting that could be held remotely. In order to ensure sufficient independent involvement, it was recommended that the number of independent persons on the Committee be increased from two to three on a four year term. In addition, the Monitoring Officer explained that it was also proposed to increase the number of Parish Councillors on the Committee from one to three to ensure that a Parish Councillor was able to sit on the Panel and to avoid reliance on a single person to fulfil that role – ideally there would be a spread of Parish Councillors so that any complaints about particular areas could be heard by a Parish Councillor from a different part of the borough. The number of independent persons and Parish Councillors on the Committee required a Council decision but the way in which complaints were dealt with was a matter for the Committee and Monitoring Officer and his view was that it would be beneficial for members of the Committee to have an understanding of complaints and gain the knowledge to be able to speak to others regarding conduct.

7.3 The Chair asked the independent persons for their view on increasing the number of independent persons from two to three and they were both of the opinion it was a good idea given they were long serving members of the Committee and would be looking to stand down from their roles at some point in the future. In response to a query as to when the four year term would start from, the Monitoring Officer indicated that it could be anytime - introducing a four year term was intended to introduce the potential for turnover; however, this did not prevent members from standing again. The Committee on Standards in Public Life promoted the regular review of arrangements so it was a good idea to review the procedure at this point and, if things were not working, they could be changed going forward. A Member indicated that he had been an independent person on an Independent Remuneration Panel for another authority and knew it could be difficult to find enough people for those roles so he asked how it was intended to recruit. In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that he would email all Parish and Town Councils regarding the Parish Councillor positions and interviews would be conducted by himself and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee. An advertisement for independent persons would be placed on the Council's website and in the local newspaper for a period of two weeks following which interviews would be carried out and the appointments would need to be agreed by Council in April.

7.4 It was subsequently

**RESOLVED**

1. That the procedure for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints be **ADOPTED** as set out at Paragraph 2.1 of the report.
2. That it be **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that:
  - the number of independent persons on the Standards Committee be increased from two to three; and,
  - the number of Parish Councillors on the Standards Committee be increased from one to three.

The meeting closed at 2:15 pm