

# Public Document Pack



**Cherwell**

DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

**Committee:** The Standards Committee  
**Date:** Thursday 17 March 2022  
**Time:** 5.00 pm  
**Venue:** Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

## Membership

**Councillor Simon Holland  
(Chairman)**

Councillor Mark Cherry  
Councillor Perran Moon  
Councillor Bryn Williams

**Councillor John Donaldson (Vice-Chairman)**

Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor George Reynolds  
Councillor Lucinda Wing

## AGENDA

**1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

**3. Requests to Address the Meeting**

The Chairman to report on any requests to address the meeting.

**4. Urgent Business**

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

**5. Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 October 2021.

## **6. Chairman's Announcements**

To receive communications from the Chairman.

## **7. Adoption of Revised Councillors' Code of Conduct**

Report of the Interim Monitoring Officer.

\*\*\*Please note this report will follow as it is currently being reviewed and finalised\*\*\*

## **8. Standards Arrangements - Appointment of Independent Person**

Report of Interim Monitoring Officer.

\*\*\*Please note this report will follow as it is currently being reviewed and finalised\*\*\*

**Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members Room at the end of the meeting.**

## **Information about this Meeting**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence should be notified to [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or 01295 221534 prior to the start of the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item. The definition of personal and prejudicial interests is set out in the constitution.

### **Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

### **Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the car park as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

## **Access to Meetings**

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

## **Mobile Phones**

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

## **Queries Regarding this Agenda**

Please contact Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk),  
01295 221534

**Yvonne Rees**  
**Chief Executive**

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## **Cherwell District Council**

### **The Standards Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of The Standards Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 11 October 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Simon Holland (Chairman)  
Councillor John Donaldson (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Mark Cherry  
Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor George Reynolds  
Councillor Bryn Williams  
Councillor Lucinda Wing

Also Present:

Tom Edwards  
Graham Matthews – Independent Person

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Perran Moon  
Stuart Green – Independent Person

Officers:

Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer  
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

#### **3        **Declarations of Interest****

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4        **Requests to Address the Meeting****

There were no requests to address the meeting.

#### **5        **Urgent Business****

There were no matters of urgent business.

6 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 10 October 2012, 15 May 2013, 16 June 2014, 19 May 2015, 17 May 2016, 16 May 2017, 15 May 2018, 14 May, 2019 and 19 May 2021 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

7 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

8 **Appointment of Independent Persons**

The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report for the Committee to consider and agree the proposed arrangements for the appointment of Independent Persons.

The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer explained the reasoning for appointing Independent Persons, the required number of Independent Persons and their term of office. She also thanked the current Independent Persons for the work they had carried out and hoped that they would be re-applying.

In considering the Independent Person role profile, Members agreed that the list of required attributes should be reviewed as some would be difficult for applicants to demonstrate, for example, "an understanding of ethical issues". The list should also be shortened to avoid duplication and appeal to as wide a demographic as possible. The Committee also requested that there not be reliance on applicants submitting a CV but rather there should be a short application form.

In response to Members comments, the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer confirmed that "an understanding of ethical issues" would be removed from the attributes and that all other attributes on the list would be reviewed, combined, and detailed as essential and desirable as far as practicable. The Committee's comments regarding the application form were also noted.

The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer advised that virtual interviews would be held with a panel consisting of the Standards Committee Chairman and two other Standards Committee members ensuring cross party representation. The panel would be supported by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer. It was anticipated that the interviews would be in late November and the Democratic and Elections Officer would liaise with Committee members.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the recruitment of Independent Persons be agreed.

- (2) That the proposed arrangements for the appointment of Independent Persons be agreed.
- (3) That subject to the deletion of 'an understanding of ethical issues' in the Role Profile, the Job Description and Role Profile be agreed and authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee to make any final amendments to the Job Description and Role Profile.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee to finalise the recruitment pack.

## 9 **Monitoring Officer Report**

The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report which gave an overview on potential changes to the member code of conduct and an update on member code of conduct complaints.

The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer explained that during 2020 the Local Government Association had consulted on a new model code of conduct for Members, which had been broadly supported. The emphasis was on creating clarity around responsibilities, the importance of good behaviours, particularly in the use of social media, and the creation of national guidance.

In keeping with the principle that, ideally, a similar Code should be adopted across Oxfordshire, the Monitoring Officers from across the county had agreed to work up a potential revised Code, based on the Model, for consideration by each authority, with a view to potential implementation by each Council by May 2022.

Members agreed that a common code of conduct across all councils in Oxfordshire was sensible. Members requested that when the new code of conduct came forward for Member consideration, the changes between the new and current code of conduct be highlighted.

In response to Members' comments, the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that should Cherwell District Council (or any Oxfordshire authority) wish to modify the proposed Oxfordshire code in any way, the modifications would have to be agreed by all Oxfordshire Councils for the same model code of conduct to be used county wide.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

- (2) That having considered matters of ethical governance within the Standards Committee Terms of Reference no further areas for report were identified.

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm

Chairman:

Date: