

**MEMBER CONDUCT COMMITTEE
22ND MARCH 2021**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Tassell)
The Vice Chair (Councillor Murphy)
Councillors Bentley, Draycott, Hadji-Nikolaou,
Rollings and Ward
Councillors Ball, Ellingworth and Jones (Parish
Members)

Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer (NC)

APOLOGIES: none

The Chair stated that the meeting would be live streamed and the recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. She also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

7. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

8. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

9. QUESTIONS UNDER COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 12.8

No questions had been received.

10. UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Considered a report of the Monitoring Officer providing an update on complaints received about breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct and any issues arising from those complaints (item 5 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Deputy Monitoring Officer noted that there was one outstanding Parish complaint from 2019-20 which was still being investigated. Of the 7 complaints received during 2020-21, one complaint at the fact-finding stage required no further action as the councillor had since resigned from office.

It was also noted that the Borough Council shared a pool of 5 Independent Persons who support the complaints process with other district councils. The appointments had been made in 2015 and at Annual Council in 2020 the appointment period had been extended for one year due to the Pandemic. A recruitment process was

underway with North West Leicestershire leading the process and the proposed appointments would be submitted to Full Council in due course.

RESOLVED that the current position in respect of complaints about breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct that have been received by noted.

Reason

To keep the Committee informed about complaints.

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) - MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Considered a report of the Monitoring Officer providing an opportunity for the Committee to consider the LGA Model Code of Conduct (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

In response to questions the Deputy Monitoring Officer noted that it was expected that all Leicestershire district councils would be able to adopt a common code, although some local variations would be considered. Although sanctions had not been mentioned in the LGA Model Code of Conduct, this could be considered once the Government guidance and response to the recommendations by the Committee of Standards in Public Life had been published.

Members considered it was important for rules around the use of social media to be strengthened and that the raising of the receipt of gifts and hospitality value to £50 was inappropriate in the current climate of transparency. The Deputy Monitoring Officer stated she would highlight the Committee's views that the current gifts and hospitality limit of £25 was considered sufficient for Charnwood Borough Council at the next meeting of the Monitoring Officer Code of Conduct Work group.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered the content of the LGA Model Code of Conduct.

Reason

The Committee were appraised of the key points of the new national Code of Conduct but noted that it would be appropriate when the Code of Conduct was agreed by Monitoring Officers across Leicestershire for the Committee to be given the opportunity to review it prior to being approved by Full Council.

12. WORK PROGRAMME

Considered a report of the Monitoring Officer enabling the Committee to agree a work programme to plan its future business (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was noted that the Work Programme might require adjustment, depending when the response from the Government was received to the recommendations by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. It was hoped this would coincide with the development of the Code of Conduct by Monitoring Officers from Leicestershire district councils.

RESOLVED that the Committee's current work programme be noted and updated in accordance with the decisions taken during the consideration of this item and other items on the agenda.

Reason

To enable the Committee to fulfil its role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillor and co-opted members.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the next ordinary Council meeting unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Member Conduct Committee.