



Reigate & Banstead
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate

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| SIGNED OFF BY | Acting Head of Paid Service |
| AUTHOR | Caroline Waterworth, Director of Commercial and Investments |
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| TO | Standards Committee |
| DATE | 1 September 2020 |
| LEAD MEMBER | Chair of Standards |

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| KEY DECISION REQUIRED | No |
| WARDS AFFECTED | All Wards |

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| SUBJECT | Annual Standards Report |
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| RECOMMENDATIONS |
| 1. That the Committee receives and notes the Annual Standards Report 2019/20 |
| REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS |
| To demonstrate the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Councillors. |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY |
| This report summarises the discharge of the Standards function during 2019/20, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Member Code of Conduct• Complaints against Members• The role of the Monitoring Officer• Maintenance of the Register of Interests |
| The Standards Committee may receive and note this report |

STATUTORY POWERS

The Localism Act 2011 requires Councils to have in place locally focussed processes for regulating the conduct of Members. The Act also imposes a duty on Councils to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members.

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of Conduct

1. All Members were provided with Code of Conduct training after the local elections in 2019.
2. The Member Code of Conduct was comprehensively reviewed during 2019/20 by the Monitoring Officer and the Governance Task Group, in accordance with the findings of the review conducted by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
3. The Governance Task Group agreed the revised Code of Conduct in March 2020, and recommended the Code to Council for approval in July 2020 where it was duly approved. A summary of the revisions are set out below for ease of reference and the full amended code is attached.
 - Defining Bullying/harassment and examples of such behaviours
 - Consideration of the application of the Code of Conduct to Social Media
 - Introduction of a requirement to declare gifts and hospitality over £25

Complaints against Members

4. The procedure for dealing with complaints involves the following four stages:
 - initial consideration by the Monitoring Officer (Stage 1)
 - local resolution (Stage 2)
 - referral to an Assessment Panel (Stage 3)
 - determination by a Hearings Sub-Committee (Stage 4)
5. Three complaints against Members were received in 2019/20, from members of the public and a complaint against a Member was made by a member of staff. Two were resolved, and one complex case is ongoing. All three cases related to a perceived failure to treat others with respect.
6. Of the two cases that were resolved, one failed to meet the threshold of a valid complaint, and the other was informally resolved by the office of the Monitoring Officer, having spoken with the Member concerned, writing to the complainant in clarification.
7. The Monitoring Officer did receive a complaint against a Member by a member of staff during the relevant period. Whilst the matter is now concluded, it did reveal a number of learning points and areas of improvement which could be made to the current protocol. During the coming Municipal Year, the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer will work with the Standards Committee and its Chair to implement those learning points and bring forward an updated protocol to bring increased clarity and transparency to the process.

Role of the Monitoring Officer

8. The Role of the Monitoring Officer is held by the Commercial and Investment Director, a qualified lawyer. The Deputy Monitoring Officer is the Head of Legal and Governance.

Maintenance of the Register of Interests

9. The register of interests forms are completed by Members electronically, verified, and published on the Council's website.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The Constitution sets out the role of the Standards Committee, and the Monitoring Officer, in promoting high standards of conduct. This committee helps to promote and maintain the highest standards of conduct amongst members of the Council, and ensures that Councillors act in accordance with the Local Government Code of Conduct
11. The Council has recently formed a Governance Task Group. This is a cross-party Task Group should be established to provide a forum for the continued review of governance matters by the Council.
12. The Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee and the Governance Task Group will require a review to ensure there is no overlap or confusion between their distinct remits,

CONSULTATION

13. The Monitoring Officer consulted on necessary matters with the Chair of the Standards Committee throughout the year.
14. Regular update meetings are held with the Standards Committee Chairman and the Political Group Leaders throughout the year. These provide a proactive opportunity to promote good conduct and raise any concerns at an early stage
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

16. Minutes from Annual Standards meeting June 2018
17. Code of Conduct
18. Procedures for dealing with complaints under the member code of conduct