

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Standards Committee was held on Monday 23 January 2023.

PRESENT: Councillors Councillor Tom Mawston, D Coupe, S Dean, S Hill, D Rooney, J Rostron and M Storey

OFFICERS: A Perriman, Joanne McNally

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: M Saunders

22/14 **WELCOME AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and read out the Building Evacuation Procedure.

22/15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for Absence

22/16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting..

22/17 **MINUTES- STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 17 OCTOBER 2022**

The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 17 October 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

22/18 **QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

A joint report of the Director of Legal And Governance Services and Executive Member for Legal And Governance Services was presented to provide a quarterly update to the Standards Committee regarding the recent and current position concerning Code of Conduct complaints and an update in regards to the Motion presented to full Council on the Standards Hearing on Wednesday 30 November 2022 in regards to breaches of the Code of Conduct by Councillor McTigue.

There was 1 complaint from 2020, and 4 complaints from 2021, 5 ongoing from 2022 at various stages of the process which had not yet concluded. Specific information in relation to those complaints could not currently be provided so as not to prejudice any outcomes, and/or create a conflict should any of those complaints be considered by the Standards Committee at a future date.

An update to the figures previously given was provided, whereby it had been clarified two of the 2022 complaints had been resolved previously

Eight new complaints had been submitted to date in 2023, which were currently being assessed.

On 11th May 2022 the Standards Committee, in consultation with the Independent Person, ordered that sanctions were imposed on Councillor J McTigue as a result of a number of breaches of the Members Code of Conduct. An update in regards to those sanctions was provided as follows:

- a. Councillor McTigue to provide a written apology to the Council employee who was the subject of the complaint, by 6 July 2022, with a copy provided to the Standards Committee. UPDATE: Not complied with. Cllr McTigue had refused to write the letter to date.

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- b. Councillor McTigue to receive one-to-one training on the appropriate use of social media and the Member/Officer Protocol, to be provided by the relevant Council Officer(s), and this should be completed by 6 July 2022. UPDATE: Not complied with. Training was offered however Cllr McTigue refused to participate.
- c. Councillor McTigue to be subject of a motion of public censure at the Council meeting scheduled for 6 July 2022. UPDATE: the motion was considered and passed by a vote on 30 November 2022
- d. Should sanctions 1 and 2 above not be completed within the stated timescale, Councillor McTigue would be subject to further public censure.

Following the previous committee meeting, it was ordered in consultation with the Independent Person via written correspondence, the following sanctions were imposed:

- a. Councillor McTigue to be removed from the role of Chair of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. This sanction had immediate effect.
- b. Councillor McTigue to be subject of a motion of public censure, proposed by Councillor Mawston, and seconded by Councillor M Storey, at the next ordinary Council meeting as follows:
 - i. It is to be noted that Cllr McTigue had been found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct and further had failed to comply with the sanctions that were imposed by the Standards Committee at the hearing on the 11th May 2022, namely:
 - 1. Councillor McTigue was to provide a written apology to the Council employee who was the subject of the complaint, by 6 July 2022, with a copy provided to the Standards Committee.
 - 2. Councillor McTigue to receive one-to-one training on the appropriate use of social media and the Member/Officer Protocol, to be provided by the relevant Council Officer(s), and this should be completed by 6 July 2022.

Members expressed concern over the 8 complaints received since January 2023 and queried if the complaints were in relation to more than 1 individual it was advised that the complaints related to 2 individuals and that a number of the complaints were largely in relation to the same thing. Members heard that the complaints had not been assessed yet.

The Chair of the Standards Committee informed members that he had been in discussion with Simon Clarke MP in relation to resurrecting the Standards Board of England. Members were advised that other local authorities had similar issues to Middlesbrough and Simon Clarke had asked for more comments and support from Councillors in relation to the Board being resurrected. It was advised that views and examples were put forward previously to the Select Committee from Middlesbrough Council.

Members expressed further concern regarding a case that was ready to go to a hearing and felt that a date needed to be fixed and the hearing take place before purdah. The Head of Legal Services agreed to see if this would be possible.

AGREED as follows:

- 1. The report was received and noted

None