



Telford & Wrekin  
C O U N C I L

Addenbrooke House Ironmasters Way Telford TF3 4NT

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date **5 February 2019** Time **6.00pm**  
Venue **Room G3/G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford TF3 4NT**

### Enquiries Regarding this Agenda:

Democratic Services	Jayne Clarke	01952 383205
Media Enquiries	Corporate Communications	01952 382407
Lead Officer	Jonathan Eatough, Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning	01952 383200

Committee Membership: Councillors **E A Clare (Chair)**, **M J Smith (Vice Chair)**,  
J C Ashford, S Barnes, A R H England, R T Kiernan and  
G C W Reynolds.

## AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Minutes** Appendix **A**  
To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 13 February 2018.
- 4. Review of the Terms of Reference / Update Report** Appendix **B**  
The report of the Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday, 13 February 2018 at 6pm in Meeting Room G3-G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

**Present:** Councillors E Clare (Chair), A R H England, R T Kiernan and G C W Reynolds.

**In Attendance:** J Eatough (Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning and Monitoring Officer), C Humphries (Independent Person) and J Clarke (Democratic & Scrutiny Officer).

#### **ST-06      Apologies for Absence**

None

#### **ST-07      Declarations of Interest**

None

#### **ST-08      Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 31 October 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

A question arose from the minutes regarding the time element on ASBOS and if an ASBO was imposed in teenage years if it was still likely to disqualify an adult from becoming an elected Member. The Monitoring Officer understood that the ASBO was only taken into consideration whilst it was “live”.

#### **ST-09      Update Report**

The Committee received the report presented by the Monitoring Officer which gave an update on the Ethical Framework, Training Plan and a Consultation on Standards in Public Life.

#### Complaints

One complaint had been received since the writing of the report regarding Social Media which was currently being investigated.

#### Training

A training plan was currently being devised which would include 5-10 minute video shorts and would be available through the Ollie system.

The training at Wellington Town Council had taken place in January 2018. It has been necessary to cancel the training in December 2017 due to the snow.

Appendix 1 to the report gave some recent cases for Members' information.

### Consultation on Standards in Public Life

Members considered the consultation questions below:

- a. Are the existing structures, processes and practices in place working to ensure high standards of conduct by local councillors? If not, please say why.
- b. What, if any, are the most significant gaps in the current ethical standards regime for local government?

#### **Response:**

**Members concluded that the existing structures, process and practices in place were satisfactory and that the Council has a robust approach to its ethical standards.**

#### *Codes of conduct*

- c. Are local authority adopted codes of conduct for councillors clear and easily understood? Do the codes cover an appropriate range of behaviours? What examples of good practice, including induction processes, exist?
- d. A local authority has a statutory duty to ensure that its adopted code of conduct for councillors is consistent with the Seven Principles of Public Life and that it includes appropriate provision (as decided by the local authority) for registering and declaring councillors' interests. Are these requirements appropriate as they stand? If not, please say why.

#### **Response:**

**Members felt that it was good practice to have inductions and training for both newly elected Members and current Members. They considered that if Members had not attended training that they would not have the tools to undertake their role. It was suggested that mentoring took place within the political groups and that on-line training courses could be an accessible way for Members to undertake any necessary training.**

#### *Investigations and decisions on allegations*

- e. Are allegations of councillor misconduct investigated and decided fairly and with due process?
  - i. What processes do local authorities have in place for investigating and deciding upon allegations? Do these processes meet requirements for due process? Should any additional safeguards be put in place to ensure due process?
  - ii. Is the current requirement that the views of an Independent Person must be sought and taken into account before deciding on an allegation sufficient to ensure the objectivity and fairness of the

decision process? Should this requirement be strengthened? If so, how?

- iii. Monitoring Officers are often involved in the process of investigating and deciding upon code breaches. Could Monitoring Officers be subject to conflicts of interest or undue pressure when doing so? How could Monitoring Officers be protected from this risk?

**Response:**

**The Monitoring Officer had not had to undertake an investigation to date. With regard to iii) statutory protection was in place.**

*Sanctions*

- f. Are existing sanctions for councillor misconduct sufficient?
  - i. What sanctions do local authorities use when councillors are found to have breached the code of conduct? Are these sanctions sufficient to deter breaches and, where relevant, to enforce compliance?
  - ii. Should local authorities be given the ability to use additional sanctions? If so, what should these be?

**Response:**

**The Monitoring Officer could only use the current sanctions, if this became necessary, and these could not be changed. At f ii), however, Members concluded that if additional sanctions could be imposed that these could be one of the following:**

- **A period of suspension and a freeze on allowances/remuneration**
- **Withdrawal of support from Member Services**
- **Removal of resources/equipment**
  - **ie exclude from receiving confidential papers/computer equipment**
- **Public element to penalties**
  - **ie declared at full Council and minuted**

*Declaring interests and conflicts of interest*

- g. Are existing arrangements to declare councillors' interests and manage conflicts of interest satisfactory? If not please say why.
  - i. A local councillor is under a legal duty to register any pecuniary interests (or those of their spouse or partner), and cannot participate in discussion or votes that engage a disclosable pecuniary interest, nor take any further steps in relation to that matter, although local authorities can grant dispensations under certain circumstances. Are these statutory duties appropriate as they stand?
  - ii. What arrangements do local authorities have in place to declare councillors' interests, and manage conflicts of interest that go beyond the statutory requirements? Are these satisfactory? If not, please say why.

**Response:**

**Current arrangements satisfactory**

*Whistleblowing*

- h. What arrangements are in place for whistleblowing, by the public, councillors, and officials? Are these satisfactory?

**Response:**

**Current arrangements satisfactory**

*Improving standards*

- i. What steps could *local authorities* take to improve local government ethical standards?  
j. What steps could *central government* take to improve local government ethical standards?

**Response:**

**Current arrangements satisfactory**

*Intimidation of local councillors*

- k. What is the nature, scale, and extent of intimidation towards local councillors?  
i. What measures could be put in place to prevent and address this intimidation?

**Response:**

**Current arrangements were satisfactory and include personal safety training for Councillors. It was suggested that Members do not undertake visits to constituents alone and either take a ward colleague with them or hold the meeting in a Parish/Town Council building. Further suggestions were not to respond to trolling/intimidation and to block people from e-mails and social media who were causing issues.**

**RESOLVED – that:**

- a) the report including the proposed Members' Standards and Code of Conduct training plan be approved; and  
b) delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair, to submit a response on behalf of the Committee to the Committee on Standards in Public Life in relation to their consultation

**paper taking into account comments made by Members during the consideration of this.**

**ST-10      Presentation from the Independent Person**

Mr C Humphries, Independent Person, gave a presentation which outlined the role of the Independent Person.

The Independent Person was there to act as an impartial consultee on councillor code of conduct complaints. This will be at the point where a complaint is made and the Monitoring Officer was deciding whether the complaint should proceed, when the Standards Committee were deciding on whether a councillor had acted in breach of the Code of Conduct and the Independent Person could also be contacted by councillors if they have concerns about a conduct complaint against them.

The role of the Independent Person was introduced through the Localism Act. Full Council appoints the Independent Person for a term of four years from 2015-2019.

The Independent person quoted as follows:

- **Independence** is the key attribute. The Independent person must therefore avoid being seen as 'part of the authority' and they should not become too close to individuals within. They are there to ensure the fairness of the processes for all concerned, and to act as a guarantor to both the council and the public that standards matters are being dealt with effectively, efficiently and proportionately. This has to be seen to be an **Independent** role.

The Chair thanked Mr Humphries for his presentation and attendance at the meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.16 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 5 FEBRUARY 2019**

**REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE/ UPDATE REPORT**

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: GOVERNANCE, PROCUREMENT & COMMISSIONING**

**PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 To review and agree the terms of reference of the committee, to receive an update on complaints received by the Monitoring Officer since the last Standards Committee meeting and .

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Committee review and agree the existing terms of reference as suitable and appropriate;
- 2.2 That the Committee agrees the revised Protocol on Social Media and its circulation to all members and Town and Parish Clerks.
- 2.3 That the Committee notes the publication of the report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life on local government ethical standards and asks the Monitoring Officer to provide more detailed analysis of the implications on ethical standards in Telford & Wrekin at its next meeting

**3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	The Committee is part of the Council's decision making framework and therefore contributes to all of the Council's priorities.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	None	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	No	The recommendations of this report will not have any financial implications
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	This report meets the statutory requirements relating to the Code of Conduct and ethical framework. The record of complaints reflects the formal written record of complaints received by the Monitoring Officer and, in accordance with the process are not

		closed unless and until they are discussed with the Council's Independent Person.
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	No	There are no other specific impacts arising from this report.
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **4. INFORMATION**

- 4.1 To provide an update to the Committee on work undertaken in relation to the ethical framework and particularly issues relating to complaints received and training.

#### **Terms of Reference**

The existing terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1 to this report. There are no suggested amendments from officers at this stage.

#### **Training Update**

- 4.2 With elections due in May this year officers' planning is concentrating on Induction Training. Plans previously reported to and agreed by this committee in respect of on-line and video training will be in place for Councillors, at Town and Parish level and at Borough level post-election in time for the induction of new Councillors.
- 4.3 The development of an "Ollie" training programme on Standards remains is still to be developed. Officers will report on progress to the next meeting of this committee.

#### **Committee on Standards in Public Life**

- 4.4 Members will recall receiving the Consultation Paper from the Committee on Standards in Public Life at their meeting on 13 February 2018. A report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life on local government ethical standards is due to be published on 30 January 2019. Officers will provide a verbal update on its contents to the meeting and will prepare a more detailed analysis of the implications for the ethical framework locally for the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

#### **Complaints**

- 4.5 Since the last update report to this meeting in February 2018 the Monitoring Officer has received 16 complaints, 3 relating to Parish Councillors and 13 relating to Borough Councillors, summarised details are as follows:

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Referral</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Current status</b>
17	Oct 17	T&W	No	Allegations relating to actions outside role as a Councillor	Closed December 2017
18	Feb 18	T&W	No	Allegations in respect of social media "like"	Closed February 2018

19	Mar 18	Parish Council	No	Allegations relating to comments on social media	Closed November 2018
20	Mar 18	T&W	No	Allegations relating to declarations of pecuniary interest	Closed November 2018
21	Mar 18	T&W	No	Allegations in respect of ward matters	Closed November 2018.
22	Sept 18	T&W	No	Allegations in respect ward matters	On-going - potential resolution - 18/09/18
23	Sept 18	T&W	No	Allegations made in respect of ward matters	Closed October 2018
24	Nov 18	T&W	Pending	Allegations in respect of actions of the Councillor in the community	More information requested - pending
25	Nov 18	Parish Council	Pending	Allegations in respect of inappropriate comments alleged to have been made by Councillor	Closed January 2019
26	Nov 18	T&W	No	Allegations of failure to respond to request for information	Closed November 2018
27	Nov 18	T&W	No	Allegations of failure to respond to request information	Closed November 2018
28	Nov 18	T & W	No	Complaint about comments by Councillor made at Council Committee	Closed – November 2018
29	Dec 18	T & W	No	Confidentiality/ safe-guarding	Closed – December 2018
30	Dec 18	T & W	No	Allegations relating to comments on social media	Closed – December 2018
31	Dec 18	Parish Council	No	Allegations regarding comments on social media	Closed – December 2018
32	Jan 19	T & W	No	Allegations in respect of social media "like"	Closed – January 2019

4.6 Whilst there have been more complaints in the last year it remains noteworthy that none have been deemed serious enough for referral by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person. Please note there are 2 outstanding complaints.

4.7 The inappropriate use of social media remains at the root of many complaints, about

a third of complaints. 43% of complaints emanate from Councillors role in the community, for example communications and ward inquiries/ requests with the remaining 24% either complaints that were outside the jurisdiction of the Code, ie in respect of a Councillor's private life or governance related complaints around roles in committee or in relation to declaration of interests.

#### **Social Media Protocol**

- 4.8 Considering the social media complaints, although none have been referred for investigation there continue to be practical tips that arise from the complaints that would be useful for members to bear in mind. Accordingly, attached at Appendix 2 is the current version of the Protocol on Social Media. A specific element of guidance on "likes" is proposed for inclusion, as underlined. Members are asked to review the Protocol and approve this proposed amendment and agree that all members/ clerks are reminded of the existence of the Protocol and the additional guidance.

#### **Terms of reference**

- 4.9 The existing terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1 to this report. There are no suggested amendments from officers

### **5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- 5.1 Standards Committee – 20 January 2015, 7 July 2015, 9 February 2016, 5 July 2016, 25 April 2017, 31 October 2017, 13 February 2018.

### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 None

***Report prepared by Jonathan Eatough, Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director, Governance, Procurement & Commissioning 01952 383 200***

## **Standards Committee Terms of Reference, Functions, Powers and Duties (including the Hearings Sub Committee)**

**The Committee has the responsibility and delegated powers to act on behalf of the Council in dealing with the oversight of the Council's ethical governance and decide on the following matters.**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

1. To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council.
2. To support Town and Parish Councils within the Borough to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council.
3. To recommend to Council the adoption of a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the Authority.
4. To keep the [code of conduct](#) under review and recommend changes/ replacement to Council as appropriate.
5. To publicise the adoption, revision or replacement of the Council's [Code of Conduct](#).
6. To oversee the process for the recruitment of an Independent Person (and up to 2 reserves) and make recommendations to Council for their appointment.
7. To receive reports from the Monitoring Officer about:-
  - 7.1 complaints;
  - 7.2 the progress and outcome of investigations; and
  - 7.3 the establishment and maintenance of the register of interests of members and co-opted members of the Borough and Town and Parish Councils within the Borough boundaries;
- 7.4 dispensations granted to members and co-opted members of the Council.

#### **HEARINGS SUB COMMITTEE**

1. To consider investigation reports in respect of [Code of Conduct](#) complaints that are referred to it by the [Monitoring Officer](#).  
To report its findings to the Borough Council, Town of Parish Council, as appropriate for information.
2. Where a breach is found to make decisions about sanctions including:-
  - 2.1. To make recommendations to the relevant Group Leader regarding future membership of committees and sub committees;
  - 2.2. To make recommendations to Council regarding the removal of a nonaligned member from membership of committee and sub-committees;
  - 2.3. To make recommendations to the Leader of the Council regarding the removal of a member from Cabinet, or the removal of portfolio responsibilities;
  - 2.4. To instruct the [Monitoring Officer](#) to arrange training for a Borough Council member;
  - 2.5. To remove a member from all outside appointments to which he/ she has been appointed or nominated by the Council; and

2.6. To withdraw facilities provided to the member or exclude the member from defined premises (except as necessary for the member to attend formally constituted council meetings).

3. To consider applications for dispensations where:-

3.1. The dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Borough of Telford & Wrekin area; or

3.2. It is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

Note – The Standards Committee have delegated the following powers and functions to the [Monitoring Officer](#)

- 1 The power to receive and make an initial assessment of formal Code of Conduct complaints made to the Standards Committee and decide whether further action or investigation is required.
- 2 The power to make arrangements for local settlement of complaints where the Monitoring Officer considers it appropriate including arranging mediation if required.
- 3 The power to consider and grant dispensations to Members where:
  - i. The number of Members precluded from transacting the business is so great that it would impede the business of the Council, committee or Executive
  - ii. The political balance is affected to the extent that it could affect the outcome of a vote relating to the business

## **PROCEDURE**

The Committee will be conducted in accordance with the Council's [Committee Procedure Rules](#). NOTE - Separate procedures will apply when the committee is undertaking administrative or quasi-judicial functions, as below:-

## **COMPLAINING ABOUT A COUNCILLOR**

All Councillors, whether a Borough, Town or Parish Councillor have to comply with a code of conduct that details what is expected of them when they carry out their role as a Councillor.

This document explains how to make a complaint about a Councillor if you think that they might have breached a code of conduct that applies to them and also how the complaint is dealt with.

### **The Code of Conduct**

Telford & Wrekin Council has adopted a [code of conduct](#) that applies to all members and co-opted members of the Council. You can get a copy by following this link [http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20242/councillors\\_mps\\_and\\_meps/358/councillor\\_code\\_of\\_conduct](http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20242/councillors_mps_and_meps/358/councillor_code_of_conduct) or by contacting the Monitoring Officer whose contact details are provided below.

All Town and Parish Councils have their own code of conduct which you can obtain from their individual web-sites or, if there isn't one, by contacting the Clerk directly. If you are not sure which Council a Councillor belongs to then you can obtain help and support from the Monitoring Officer.

### **Can I be confident that my complaint will be properly dealt with?**

The law requires the Council to appoint an Independent Person: a person who has nothing to do with the Council other than in this role who is consulted at various stages during the

complaints process and whose role is to ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly, a role that can also include giving views to the Councillor who is the subject of the complaint.

### **Making a Complaint**

Write to the Monitoring Officer, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT or alternatively by e-mail at [monitoring.officer@telford.gov.uk](mailto:monitoring.officer@telford.gov.uk)

The Monitoring Officer is the person responsible for administering this complaints system. There is a form for you to use <https://webforms.telford.gov.uk/form/189> but you do not need to use it as long as you include all the information that is included on the form.

### **What happens next?**

The Monitoring Officer will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days of receiving it.

The Monitoring Officer will review your complaint, discuss it with the Independent Person and write to you to inform you whether or not he/she has decided to refer it for investigation. Normally this will be within 14 working days of receiving your complaint. The

Monitoring Officer might ask for more information, he/ she might also ask for information from the Councillor who you are complaining about or the Council that the Councillor is a member of.

The Monitoring Officer might seek to resolve the complaint informally, i.e. before deciding to refer your complaint for investigation. Obviously your views are important here but if the Monitoring Officer believes that the proposed solution is reasonable, for example acceptance that behaviour was unacceptable and an offered apology, this might affect the decision of the Monitoring Officer about whether or not the complaint merits formal investigation.

### **Investigations**

If referring for formal investigation the Monitoring Officer will appoint an Investigating Officer who will contact you and the Councillor that you have complained about and undertake any other such investigations as he/she considers appropriate for the purposes of the investigation. In exceptional cases your identity will be protected for some or all of the investigation. If you consider that it would be appropriate to do this in your case you must let the Monitoring Officer know when you make your complaint. (This would generally only be done where providing your details might prejudice the investigation).

The Investigation Officer will publish a draft report for consideration by you and the Councillor that you have complained. Once any comments have been considered by the Investigating Officer a Final Report will be produced and sent to the Monitoring Officer. The Final Report will then be considered by the Monitoring Officer who may either accept the report or ask the investigating Officer to re-consider his/ her report.

### **Investigation finding of No Breach**

The Monitoring Officer will write to you and the Councillor who you have complained about enclosing a copy of the Final Report and confirming that no further action is required. If it is a complaint about a Town or Parish Councillor then a copy will also be sent to the Clerk of the relevant Town or Parish Council.

### **Investigation finding of Breach**

The Monitoring Officer will write to you and the Councillor who you have complained about enclosing a copy of the Final Report and will either seek local resolution or will convene a hearing of the Council's Hearings Committee.

### **Local Resolution**

If the Monitoring Officer, the Independent Person and you all agree a fair resolution of the complaint in a way that promotes high standards of conduct and the Councillor complies with the suggested resolution then the Monitoring Officer will report the matter to the Standards Committee for information but will take no further action.

### **Hearing**

If local resolution is not possible then the Monitoring Officer will convene a meeting of the Council's Hearings Sub Committee for it to consider the Investigating Officer's Report and the views of the Independent Person on the allegation and determine whether or not there has been a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and if so what action, if any, to take in respect of the Councillor.

### **Hearing Procedure**

A copy of the Hearings Procedure is set out below:-

#### **Pre Hearing**

1. Notification of hearing date (Investigation Report already provided to the Councillor)
2. Invitation to Councillor to submit list of further documents/ witnesses that he/she wishes to call
3. Circulation of papers

#### **Hearing**

4. Introductions
5. Chair explains the process to be followed
6. Investigating Officer present his/ her report (and may ask witnesses to attend if necessary)
7. Panel may ask questions
8. Councillor or his/ her representative may ask questions
9. Councillor or his/ her representative presents his/ her case (and may as witnesses to attend if necessary)

#### **Decision – no breach**

10. The complaint is dismissed.

#### **Decision - breach**

11. After offering the Councillor complained about an opportunity to speak.

## APPENDIX 2 - STANDARDS COMMITTEE 5 FEBRUARY 2019

### Telford and Wrekin Council Standards Committee

#### Protocol for the use of social media by Councillors

The Standards Committee recognise that the use of social networking and blogging are effective methods for councillors to interact with local people and engage with those who would not normally have access to local councillors and politics.

The Committee supports the use of such media but is also aware of the challenges that it brings. This protocol is intended to assist Councillors in thinking about how they can continue to make best use of social media whilst complying with the Code of Conduct.

#### THIS PROTOCOL IS IMPORTANT AND SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY ALL COUNCILLORS USING SOCIAL MEDIA

The Committee suggests the following:

**Think** about whether you are acting in your official capacity as a councillor when posting messages or blogs. Be clear when you are making comments in a private capacity. Note that the higher your profile as a councillor, the more likely it is that you will be seen as acting in an official capacity when you post or blog

**Set** appropriate privacy settings for your social media accounts and blogs, especially if you have accounts which are private and non-political

**Keep** an eye out for defamatory or obscene posts from others on your social media accounts and remove them as soon as possible to avoid the perception that you condone such views.

#### **Re-tweeting**

Consider carefully what posts you decide to 'like' or retweet. Liking or re-tweeting will be perceived by some as your endorsement of both the sentiment and the wording of the post. There is a risk that you can be seen to be endorsing wording that is offensive or discriminatory: It is the nature of this media that this is easily done. **Do** think about **immediately** distancing yourself from such wording in a follow up tweet if you find yourself in that position. Depending on the seriousness of the wording this could be a material factor in deciding whether or not a matter is referred for investigation.

**Ensure** that you use council facilities appropriately; if you use Council social media or Council blogs/website you will be viewed as acting in your official capacity. You should not use council facilities for personal or political posts and blogs.

**Think** carefully before posting information about individuals or matters that may be commercially sensitive. Posting sensitive information could not only be a breach of the Code of Conduct but could also be a criminal offence or lead to litigation being brought against you and/or the Council. When posting any information that you have access to in your role as a Councillor you will be seen to be acting in your official capacity.

**When** making political points using social media be careful about specific views referring to individuals. A personal attack on an individual could be seen as disrespectful whereas general comments about an issue or policy is less likely to be viewed as a failure to show respect.

## APPENDIX 2 - STANDARDS COMMITTEE 5 FEBRUARY 2019

### Telford and Wrekin Council Standards Committee

**Don't** posts comments or blog in haste. If you are angry, tired or just in a bad mood stay away from your social media. Even if posts are removed quickly after, a screen shot can be taken of the post when it was on your account and this can form the basis of a complaint. Making comments in posts and blogs is just the same as making those comments in writing and/or in person to the individual concerned. Make sure that your own posts are truthful, factual and can be supported with evidence if challenged.

If you have any queries or concerns you are welcome to contact Jonathan Eatough on 01952 383200 or [Jonathan.Eatough@telford.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Eatough@telford.gov.uk)