

# **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held at Blackdown House, Honiton on 17 July 2025**

### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.04 am

#### **1 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

#### **2 Declarations of interest**

None.

#### **3 Public speaking**

None.

#### **4 Matters of urgency**

None.

#### **5 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

None.

#### **6 Gifts and Hospitality Protocol for Members update**

The revised protocol was presented to Committee for recommending forward to the Constitutional Working Party for inclusion in the revision of the Constitution. Included were suggestions made by a meeting of some of the Standards Committee members in April which was inquorate.

Additional comments on the protocol included minor amendments to the wording on paragraphs 8.8, 9.2, 10.1, 10.3 and 11.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Constitutional Working Party for recommending forward to Council, the Gifts and Hospitality Protocol for Members for inclusion in the revised Constitution.

#### **7 Review of Member Code of Conduct**

The periodic review of the Code of Conduct had been undertaken. No changes had been made to the Model Code issued by the Local Government Association since May 2021. Whilst there had been recognition of some confusion from both the public and elected members on the definitions of "other registerable interest" and non-registerable interests" to date, it was considered that having a national based model outweighs those disadvantages. The pending local government reorganisation was also considered as a factor in weighing up any changes to the existing code.

On balance, the recommendation was that no changes should be made to the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2022.

**RECOMMENDED** no changes at the current time to the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2022.

## 8 **Draft Annual Report to Council**

The committee agreed to put forward their Annual Report to the next scheduled meeting of Council in October 2025.

Suggestions were made for emphasising the sharing of good practice examples for training purposes, both from previous case decisions from other authorities, and from case law. Stress on the low attendance of District Councillors was also welcomed in the report and that issue had been raised with the Group Leaders.

**RESOLVED** for the Annual Report of the Standards Committee to be put to Council for their October meeting.

## 9 **Code of conduct complaints update**

The report gave details of complaints covering the period April 2025 to July 2025.

Members of the committee congratulated the team involved, both officers and the work of the Independent Persons, which had led to the reduction of complaints received, due to effective engagement in pre-complaint discussion.

Improvements to the related web pages also helped manage expectation of the process.

The committee noted the report.

## 10 **Standards Committee Work Programme**

The committee agreed the 2025/26 work programme. The update report on gifts and hospitality would be included for the November scheduled meeting of the committee.

## 11 **Standards update**

The committee were updated on planned code of conduct refresher training for all District Councillors later in the year.

The committee proceeded to discuss two recent cases for training purposes after the meeting was closed by the Chair.

### **Attendance List**

#### **Councillors present:**

E Rylance (Chair)

T Dumper

S Hughes

J Loudoun

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

R Collins

**Officers in attendance:**

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Katie Webb, Property Lawyer

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

**Councillor apologies:**

J Bailey

J Whibley

Chair .....

Date: .....