

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Standards Committee

Date: Wednesday, 23rd March, 2022

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor I Shead (Chair)
Councillors B Hooper (Vice-Chair), K Buck (Minutes 843-846),
T Cowdrey, T Cox (Minutes 843-846), A Moring (Minutes 843-846)
and J Moyies (Minutes 843-846)*

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: Councillor J Healey (Leigh Town Council), J Morgan, J Tetley
(Independent Persons)
S Tautz and J Williams

Start/End Time: 5.00 pm - 6.25 pm

843 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Cowan (no substitute) and Councillor D Nelson (Substitute: Councillor J Moyies).

844 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

(a) Councillor I Shead - Minute 847 (Complaints Against a Councillor – References 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003) - Non-pecuniary interest: Knows the councillors subject of the complaints as fellow councillors.

(b) Councillor B Hooper - Minute 847 (Complaints Against a Councillor - References 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003) - Non-pecuniary interest: Knows the councillors subject of the complaints as fellow councillors.

(c) Councillor Cowdrey - Minute 847 (Complaints Against a Councillor - References 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003) - Non-pecuniary interest: Knows the councillors subject of the complaints as fellow councillors.

(d) Councillor T Cox - Minute 847 (Complaints Against a Councillor - References 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003) - Non-pecuniary interest: Knows the councillors subject of the complaints as fellow councillors.

(e) Councillor K Buck - Minute 847 (Complaints Against a Councillor - References 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003) - Non-pecuniary interest: Knows the councillors subject of the complaints as fellow councillors.

(f) Councillor A Moring - Minute 847 (Complaints Against a Councillor - References 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003) - Non-pecuniary interest: Knows the councillors subject of the complaints as fellow councillors.

(g) Councillor J Moyies - Minute 847 (Complaints Against a Councillor - References 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003) - Non-pecuniary interest: Knows the councillors subject of the complaints as fellow councillors.

(h) Councillor J Healey (Leigh Town Council) - Minute 847 (Complaints Against a Councillor - References 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003) - Non-pecuniary interest: Knows the councillors subject of the complaints.

845 The New LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) presenting a new Model Councillor Code of Conduct produced by the Local Government Association (LGA), with a view to making a recommendation to Council to adopt the same Code.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services).

Resolved:

1. That the Council be recommended to adopt the Model Councillor Code of Conduct (May 2021 version) produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) as attached at appendix 1 to the submitted report, with effect from the commencement of the 2022/23 municipal year, to replace the existing Members' Code of Conduct in Part 5a of the Constitution.
2. That, if the new Code of Conduct is adopted, appropriate training be provided for all councillors.
3. That a review of the current Complaints against Members Rules set out in Part 4(i) of the Constitution should commence without delay, overseen by the Standards Committee.

846 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below, on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

847 Complaints Against a Councillor - Reference 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) and Monitoring Officer requesting that it undertake an initial review and assessment of standards complaints reference 22/001, 22/002 and 22/003 and determine the next steps with regard to each complaint.

The Committee received additional information submitted by the complainant in respect of complaint reference 22/002, which had been received by the Monitoring Officer since the publication of the agenda for the meeting.

Councillors asked a number of questions which were responded to by the Monitoring Officer. The Committee also sought and took into consideration the views of the Independent Persons.

Resolved:

1. That standards complaints reference 22/001 and 22/002 be referred for formal investigation.
2. That standards complaint reference 22/003 does not require any further steps or investigation.

Chair: _____