

Standards and Ethics Committee

**Wednesday, 23 October 2019, 10.00 am, County Hall,
Worcester, WR5 2NP**

		Minutes
Present:		Mr S J Mackay (Chairman), Mr B Brookes, Dr A J Hopkins, Dr K A Pollock, Mr R P Tomlinson and Mr R M Udall
Also attended:		Mr M Mylechreest
Available papers		The members had before them: A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April, 2019 (previously circulated).
278	Apologies and Named Substitutes	Apologies for absence were received from Mr RC Adams, Mr R M Bennett, Mrs P Hill and Dr P Whiteman. Mr B Brookes attended as substitute for Mr R Adams.
279	Declarations of Interest	Mr Mackay declared an Other Interest in paragraph 13 of Agenda item 6, Code of Conduct Complaints Update.
280	Public Participation	None.
281	Confirmation of Minutes	The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April, 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
282	Local Government Ethical Standards - Updated Pan-Worcestershire Code of Conduct for Members	<p>At its meeting in April 2019 the Committee had considered a report on the Nolan Committee recommendations about local government standards in relation to the legislative regime and best practice recommendations to local government. The Committee had asked the Monitoring Officer to discuss implications for the pan-Worcestershire Code of Conduct with his colleague Monitoring Officers, having regard to the initial views of the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee's views were that a pan-Worcestershire Code should be retained, and it should be updated to include definitions of bullying and harassment. The report to the Committee set out the recommendations from the Monitoring Officers for consideration.</p>

**283 Code of
Conduct -
Complaints
Update**

Members supported the proposed updated Code and discussed appendix 3 relating to bullying and harassment in some detail. The Monitoring Officer reported that a common sense approach would need to be taken to accusations of this type.

In approving the draft Code, Members asked that the changes to the Nolan Principles included in appendix 1 be highlighted when the Code was considered by the Council.

RESOLVED that the Committee

- (a) noted the discussions which have taken place between the Monitoring Officers of the principal authorities within Worcestershire in response to the report published by the National Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee) on standards in local government;**
- (b) endorsed the principle of a pan-Worcestershire Code of Conduct for members, and**
- (c) endorsed the draft Code of Conduct set out in the Appendix to the report and recommended that the Council adopts it.**

The Chairman of the Committee did not take part in discussion of Complaint 04/19.

The Monitoring Officer gave details of the complaints dealt with in the 2019/20 year so far. He highlighted that he aimed to reach informal solution of complaints where possible rather than escalating to a formal route. Overall, he did not have concerns about the complaints summarised in the report.

RESOLVED that the Committee

- (a) noted the formal complaints that had been made about the conduct of County Councillors and their outcome; and**
- (b) considered that no further action should be taken to ensure members are aware of and comply with their obligations under the Code of Conduct.**

The meeting ended at 10.52am.

Chairman