



Buckinghamshire Council

Standards and General Purposes Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 2 JULY 2020 IN VIRTUAL MEETING (MS TEAMS), COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.20 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

B Adams, S Adoh, M Appleyard, A Collingwood, C Etholen, G Harris, M Knight, S Lambert, H Mordue, L Smith BEM, M Stannard and J Waters.

APOLOGIES: J Bloom and G Moore.

INDEPENDENT PERSONS: S Austin and T Dobson.

Agenda Item

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Mordue, seconded by Councillor Collingwood, and

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Waters be elected Chairman of the Standards and General Purposes Committee for the ensuing year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Waters, seconded by Councillor L Smith, and

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Mordue be appointed Vice Chairman of the Standards and General Purposes Committee for the ensuing year.

3 VIRTUAL MEETING PROCEDURE RULES

RESOLVED –

That the procedural rules and guidance for conducting virtual meetings of the Standards and General Purposes Committee, as detailed at pages 3-7 of the agenda pack, be noted.

4 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOL ON THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSON

The Committee was informed that the Localism Act 2011 governed the arrangements for local authorities in respect of ethical standards. This included the Code of Conduct for Councillors, Registers of Interests and the handling of complaints. The Standards and General Purposes Committee was responsible for exercising the Council's functions under the Localism Act 2011 in relation to ethical standards and had oversight and responsibility for the Code of Conduct and the Arrangements for Dealing with Standards Complaints.

As background, following the change to a unitary council there were currently 196 Buckinghamshire Councillors (reducing to 147 after the May 2021 elections) and over 1000 Town and Parish Councillors across the Buckinghamshire Council administrative area. The Monitoring Officer was responsible for dealing with complaints against councillors but it was expected that the majority of this work would be passed onto the Deputy Monitoring Officers. In the interests of fairness to both complainants and Members a consistent approach in both procedure and decision making was considered best practice. This could be achieved by having more detailed guidance for complaints and clarity on the role of the Independent Person.

The Councillor Code of Conduct applicable to the councillors of Buckinghamshire Council was set out in the Council's Constitution at Part H Section 2. The Code of Conduct also included the requirements for registration of interests. Part H Section 3 contained the Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints against Councillors. The Code of Conduct had been drafted so it would be sufficiently high level to cover any relevant situation and also provide clarity in certain circumstances (e.g. in relation to interests). This Committee had oversight of the Code but as it was contained within the Constitution any changes had to be recommended to full Council.

Whilst there was an overview of the arrangements for dealing with complaints in the Constitution it was considered that as the practical application of the arrangements were an operational matter, they could be subject to circumstances at the time and technology or resources might change their operation, the detailed arrangements would be better dealt within a guidance document. As such, as the Guidance was not contained within the Constitution it did not need to be approved by the Council making its practical application easier to update where necessary.

The Localism Act provided that a Council must appoint at least one Independent Person (IP) whose views were to be sought and taken into account before the Council made a decision following the investigation of a complaint that a Member or a Town or Parish Councillor had failed to comply with their Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer could also consult an IP when making a decision on how to progress a complaint. Members who were the subject of a complaint also had the right to consult an IP if a complaint was made about them.

IPs could also be involved in other aspects of a complaint such as whether to agree to keep a complainant's identity confidential. They could also be on a Panel considering the dismissal of a statutory officer and could be consulted about dispensations to be granted to our councillors. They provided an independent balance on decision making in this area. Due to the importance of the role of the IP and the Guidance on ethical standards it was considered appropriate to

have both of these documents approved by the Committee.

The Committee report detailed further information on:

- The Code of Conduct – that was split into 3 parts, with a section on general / high level obligations, and 2 further Sections relating to interests, their effect on participation in Council business and registration and disclosure of interests.
- Appendix A to the Code of Conduct – which sets out disclosable pecuniary interests, and the requirements relating to the registration of gifts and hospitality.
- The arrangements for dealing with complaints against Councillors – the process was split into 4 parts, initial assessment on whether it was appropriate to progress the complaint, then 3 stages to deal with the complaint, namely:
 - obtaining the Subject Member's response to the complaint and checking if this is satisfactory to the complainant.
 - If not, Stage 2 was formal consideration of the complaint by the Monitoring Officer or allocated Deputy Monitoring Officer to determine if to progress the complaint. Depending on the seriousness of the alleged behaviour this stage could involve consultation with the IP and/or the Chairman of the Standards and General Purposes Committee.
 - The last stage was investigation and where appropriate a referral to the Sub-Committee who could decide that a formal hearing was necessary.
- Each complaint was considered on its own merits, however the Referral Criteria list the factors could be taken into account. These were detailed at paragraph 3.11 of the Arrangements.

The draft guidance on dealing with Member complaints was attached at Appendix 1 to the agenda, and contained guidance for complainants on how to make a complaint and included the practical aspects of how it would progress. The draft Guidance was being used as a basis to progress current complaints apart from the forms as detailed. The Guidance also sets out how a complaint would be dealt with as well as more detail on the process and procedures such as confidentiality and the procedures for investigations, hearings and committees.

Amendments to the Guidance were reserved to the Committee but the Chairman of the Hearings Sub-Committee could, following consultation with the IP, depart from the detailed procedures where appropriate. It was considered that the Guidance would supplement and explain the Arrangements detailed in the Constitution. The Committee's views on the Guidance were sought and subject to those views it was recommended that the Guidance should be approved to ensure consistency of approach and fairness across the Council.

The Committee was informed that, as mentioned, IPs could be consulted by the Monitoring Officer, investigators or by Members subject to a complaint, and they could be asked to provide their view to the Committee or Sub-Committee if a complaint progressed. The Protocol on the role of the IP set out the roles in each of these scenarios as well as other matters which they might be involved in.

The Protocol also set out rights which were given to the IPs including addressing full Council with

any concerns as well as rights of access to Council premises and information. The relationship between the IPs and this Committee was also clearly set out. Three IPs had been appointed. Two training sessions with the IPs had taken place and a third session dealing with procedures had been scheduled for 23 June.

The Protocol provided clarity to both the IPs and Subject Members on their role and their rights as an IP. Members sought further information on the draft guidance on dealing with Member complaints and on the Protocol on the role of the IP and were informed:-

- (i) That where a complaint received was of a very minor nature, or was not actually a complaint, and did not progress to Stage 1, then it was not the intention for individual Members to be informed of this.
- (ii) An explanation was provided on how the arrangements for dealing with Member complaints worked in relation to Members who might be subject to politically motivated or malicious complaints.
- (iii) Stage 2 (No. 6) – it was requested that the Chairman and Vice Chairman be kept updated on all complaints, not just serious alleged behaviour, so that they were aware of any particular trends.
- (iv) that in some instances it would be appropriate to involve the political Group Leaders as part of the resolution process.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the arrangements for dealing with complaints against Councillors be noted.
- (2) That the draft Guidance on dealing with Member complaints, subject to the comment at (iii) above, be approved.
- (3) That the draft Protocol on the Role of the Independent Person be approved.
- (4) That a summary report on standards complaints be submitted to the next meeting in October 2020, and then at future meetings as considered appropriate by the Committee.

5 CSPL REPORT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS AND LGA CONSULTATION ON MODEL CODE

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) advised the Prime Minister on ethical standards across the whole of public life in England. It monitored and reported on issues relating to the standards of conduct of all public office holders and promoted the 7 principles of public life. In 2018 the CSPL had carried out a review into the ethical framework for local authorities which included stakeholder consultation. Its report had been published in January 2019 and the Executive Summary and Recommendations were attached at Appendix 1 to the agenda.

The main findings, observations and conclusions were:-

- High standards of conduct in local government were needed to protect the integrity of decision-making, maintain public confidence and safeguard local democracy.
- Evidence supported the view that the vast majority of councillors and officers maintained high standards of conduct. Where there was misconduct most of the cases involved bullying or harassment or other disruptive behaviour.
- Having considered the need for a centralised body to govern and adjudicate on standards

the Committee had concluded that whilst the consistency and independence of the system could be enhanced, there was no reason to reintroduce a centralised body and local authorities should retain ultimate responsibility for implementing and applying the 7 principles of public life in local government.

- There was considerable variation in the length, quality and clarity of code of conduct and many codes failed to address adequately important areas of behaviour, such as social media use and bullying and harassment. An updated model code of conduct should therefore be available to local authorities in order to enhance consistency and quality of local authority codes.
- Any standards process needed to have safeguards in place to ensure that decisions were made fairly and impartially and that councillors were protected against politically-motivated, malicious or unfounded allegations of misconduct. The Independent Person was an important safeguard in the current system and this role should be strengthened and clarified.
- The current sanctions available to local authorities were insufficient. Party discipline whilst it had an important part to play in maintaining high standards, lacked the necessary independence and transparency to play the central role in the standards system.

The report made 26 recommendations, mainly to Government but also to the Local Government Association and Parish Councils in some cases. The key recommendations were that:-

- An updated Voluntary Model Code of Conduct be created by the Local Government Association in consultation with representative bodies of councillors and officers at all tiers of local government
- The register of interests should include categories of non-pecuniary interests.
- Current rules on declaring interests should be repealed and replaced with an objective test.
- Independent persons should have fixed terms of 2 years, renewable once and protection by legal indemnity put in place if their advice or views were disclosed
- Councils to be given discretion to establish decision-making standards committees with voting independent members and voting members from dependant parishes.
- Councils to be given the power to suspend councillors for up to 6 months, to include parish councillors, if an Independent Person agrees to the suspension.
- Councillors should be given the right to appeal against suspension to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- The criminal offences relating to disclosable pecuniary interests should be abolished.
- Parish councils should be required to adopt the code of their principal authority (or the new model code) and a principal authority's sanctions for a parish councillor should be binding.
- Monitoring Officers should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake their role in providing support on standards to parish councils. Clerks should also hold an appropriate qualification.
- Political groups should set clear expectations of behaviour by their members and senior officers should maintain effective relationships with political groups.
- Political groups should require their members to attend code of conduct training provided by local authorities and write this into national party model group rules.

The CSPL also made 15 best practice recommendations shown in the Table below which were directed at local authorities. The Committee expected that any local authority could and should implement these recommendations. The Table indicated the current position at Buckinghamshire Council in terms of compliance with these recommendations.

	Recommended Best Practice	Current Position	RAG
1	Prohibition on bullying and harassment included in code of conduct together with a definition and a list of examples of the behaviour this covers	The Code includes bullying. Guidance for members refer to definition and examples of the behaviour	
2	Codes should require councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibit trivial or malicious allegations by councillors	Tit for tat complaints discouraged in complaints procedure	
3	Codes should be reviewed annually and where possible, views sought from the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities	Reviews due to be carried out annually but external consultation is not currently proposed	
4	Codes should be readily accessible to councillors and the public in a prominent position on the council's website and available in council premises	Included in the Council's Constitution and accessible when searching under complaints	
5	Council's should update their gifts and hospitality register at once a quarter and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV	Gifts and hospitality of £25 or more registrable under the code of conduct and published with the member's register of interests. Separate register not currently kept.	
6	Council's should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered	Assessment criteria listed in complaints procedure	
7	Councils should have access to at least 2 Independent Persons	The Council appoints 3 IPs	
8	Independent Person should be consulted on whether to undertake a formal investigation and be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the MO is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious or trivial.	These provision were included in the adopted complaints procedure	
9	Decisions following a formal investigation should be published as soon as possible on the Council's website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker and any sanction applied.	Complaints procedure provides for decision to be published	
10	Councils should have straightforward and accessible guidance on their website on how to make a complaint under the code, the process for handling complaints, the estimated timescales for investigations and	Guidance on the complaints procedure to be considered by the Committee on 2 July 2020	

	outcomes		
11	Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances	This is a matter for parish councils to adopt	
12	MO roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within their area. MOs should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work	The council's complaints procedure applies to complaints about parish and town councillors and these will be investigated if the relevant assessment criteria are met	
13	Councils should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps include asking the MO from a different council to undertake the investigation.	Complaints procedure allows for an external investigator to be appointed which addresses any potential conflicts of interest.	
14	Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by Councils should abide by the Nolan principles and publish their board agendas, minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.	Details of separate bodies are included in the Council's annual governance statement Publication of board agendas, minutes and reports is subject to the Constitution and procedure rules of each body and relevant statutory provisions	
15	Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues	Meetings are held informally as and when required	

The Committee was informed that most of the best practise recommendations were already in place. Members were invited to consider whether to ask the monitoring officer to bring a report on the outstanding areas to a future meeting of the committee for further consideration.

One of the CSPL recommendations addressed to the Local Government Association (LGA) was to review their model code of conduct. The LGA have undertaken this review, holding an event on Civility in Public Life with a range of stakeholders at the end of 2019 and three consultation workshops at the beginning of 2020. Their consultants also examined examples of good practice, both in local government and other professions. The result of this initial work was a consultation on a draft model code of conduct, attached at Appendix 2 to the agenda. The LGA also intended to create additional guidance, working examples and explanatory text to go alongside the model code.

Consultation on the code ran until 17 August 2020 and consultees were asked to respond by completing the questionnaire attached at Appendix 3 to the agenda. Members were advised that the LGA would particularly like to know if the model code stood up to the new ways of working that have been introduced and gave enough of a steer on social media and online

activity. The Committee was therefore invited to consider and comment on the model code and authorise the Service Director for Legal and Democratic Services to submit a final response in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

Members sought additional information and were informed:-

- (i) (Table with current position at Buckinghamshire Council against the 15 best practice CSPL recommendations that local authorities should implement) – it was explained that the current position (8 green, 7 amber) on implementation was an assessment taken at the establishment of the new Council. It was confirmed that a report could be submitted to a future meeting on the progress being made in implementing all of the best practice recommendations.
- (ii) (CSPL recommendation 3) – that it had been recommended that the Localism Act 2011 be amended to presume that Councillors were acting in an official capacity in their public conduct, including statements on publicly-accessible social media.

Members also commented:

- (CSPL recommendation 12) – that given the number of Town/Parish Councils in the Council's area, Members were supportive with representation from dependent parishes being involved to decide some allegations.
- (CSPL recommendation 18) – Members were supportive on the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to DPs being abolished.
- (CSPL recommendation 20) – Members were supportive of parish councils having to adopt the code of conduct of their principal authority, amended as necessary.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Standards in Public Life (CSPL) recommendations on Local Government Ethical Standards, attached as Appendix 1 to the agenda, be noted.
- (2) That a report on the progress made in implementing the CSPL best practice recommendations (amber ratings) be reported to a future meeting.
- (3) That the model member code of conduct proposed by the Local Government Association, attached as Appendix 2 to the agenda, be noted.
- (4) That the Service Director for Legal and Democratic Services be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards and General Purposes Committee, to submit a formal response to the LGA's consultation questions on the model code attached at Appendix 3, having regard to the Committee's comments made at this meeting.

6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND - ELECTORAL REVIEW OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

The Committee received a report and were informed that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had indicated that it intended to conduct an electoral review of the newly established Buckinghamshire Council. Preliminary discussions had taken place with the Chairman and Chief Executive of the LGBCE to understand the arrangements for such a review. Through these discussions, it had been established that:

- the model of 147 members would remain in place for the 2021 elections, with the wards based on the former County Council divisional boundaries.
- the electoral review would examine Buckinghamshire Council's electoral arrangements

and cover the following areas:

- the total number of members to be elected to the Council.
 - the number and boundaries of future electoral divisions.
 - the number of councillors representing each electoral division; and
 - the name of each electoral division.
- the outcome of the Electoral Review would take effect from the 2025 elections, although the precise timeframe for the stages of the Reviews were yet to be confirmed.

It was explained that the principal aim of the review was to deliver electoral equality across the local authority area by ensuring that all councillors represented a similar number of voters. The LGBCE had published detailed technical guidance for those who wished to participate in the review. The LGBCE was required by law to be impartial, with its decisions based on evidence and reason. The representations of all those taking part in the review would be treated equally and without bias.

The Committee report contained a table that gave an indication of the timescales the LGBCE normally worked to when conducting Reviews, which included:-

- Preliminary Period – informal dialogue with Local Authority – up to 6 months.
- Council size decision – consultation period leading to a ‘minded to’ decision on the council size, i.e. number of Councillors – 5 weeks.

Formal Review

- Consultation on future Warding / Division arrangements – 12 weeks.
- Development of draft recommendations – 12 weeks.

The Standards and General Purpose Committee had been delegated authority to deal with election arrangements, however, the LGBCE’s guidance had made it clear that the Council would need to prepare extensive information for consideration by the LGBCE and facilitate the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. It was therefore suggested that the Committee should establish a Member Working Group to oversee the preparation of the relevant information and a communication and engagement plan. The draft terms of reference for the Member working group were attached at Appendix 1 to the agenda.

The submission of the relevant information required by the LGBCE would be approved by the Standards and General Purposes Committee.

Members were also informed that the role of the LGBCE in the creation, abolition or amendments to the external boundaries of Parish Councils was limited. The LGBCE Technical Guidance indicated that Parish Councils were crucial in the work of the LGBCE in conducting a review and it was important that Parish Councils’ involvement in the Electoral Review was actively encouraged.

The Committee was advised that the LGBCE guidance on Community Governance Reviews (CGR) stated that while it might be appropriate for a local authority to undertake a CGR at the same time as an electoral review, this could also cause administrative difficulties and confusion for local people. As such, any authority contemplating this approach was strongly advised to discuss this with the LGBCE in advance.

On 7 January, 2020, the Shadow Authority for Buckinghamshire had considered a CGR for High Wycombe and decided to defer the decision until the establishment of the new Unitary authority, acknowledging that further consultation might well be necessary. In discussion with the LGBCE, they had given strong advice that the Council should wait until the Electoral Review had been completed before conducting any CGRs. The reason for this was that the LGBCE would

need to ensure that the boundaries of parish wards and unitary council wards were coterminous. If the Council completed a CGR and decided parish wards in advance of the Electoral Review, it was likely that they would need to change again. Waiting for the outcome of the Electoral Review and having certainty about the boundaries of the new unitary wards would be the best way of ensuring that any CGR outcomes were sustainable in the longer term. In the light of the LGBCE's Guidance, it was recommended to the Committee that the decision on the CGR for High Wycombe be postponed until after the Electoral Review or until such time as the LGBCE considered it appropriate.

Longwick-cum-Ilmer Parish Council had also requested a CGR to seek to increase the number of councillors from 7 to 9 to reflect the increase in housing and population. Again, for the reasons detailed to the Committee, it was not considered that the proposal for this CGR met the test as advised by LGBCE and it was recommended that a decision on commencing this CGR was deferred until the outcome of the Electoral Review.

It was further recommended to Members that any further requests received for CGRs should be considered in the light of the LGBCE advice that such reviews would ordinarily be deferred and should only be acceded to in very exceptional circumstances.

Members commented as follows:-

- it would be important for the Electoral Review, and subsequent CGRs, to ensure that Town/Parish boundaries were co-terminus with Buckinghamshire Council boundaries.
- Given that the first CGRs in relation to the High Wycombe had been submitted 2 years ago, it would be important the CGRs were finalised as soon as possible following the Electoral Review. It was also suggested that, if possible, the CGR should look at the viability of elections for a High Wycombe parished area being held in 2022 or 2023, rather than waiting until 2025.
- it was important for the Electoral Review to be Member-led and, as such, recommendations 2 and 5 should be re-worded to authorise the Members' Working Group, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, to agree the actions.
- they were supportive of the membership of the Members' Working Group being increased from 5 to 9 Members (7 Conservative Group, 2 Alliance Group).
- they had some concerns with the new Council rushing to undertake an Electoral Review before the initial elections had even been held, and that it might be more appropriate to show a bit of caution in this regard. (Members were informed that the review process was largely driven by the LGBCE, rather than the Buckinghamshire Council).

It was proposed by Councillor Collingwood, seconded by Councillor G Harris, and

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the indication from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) that it proposed to undertake an Electoral Review of Buckinghamshire be noted.
- (2) That the Members' Working Group, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, be authorised to agree the proposed timetable for the Review process with the LGBCE.
- (3) That a Member Working Group of 9 Members be established oversee the work of officers in the preparation of the statistical and other information required by the LGBCE and to approve the Terms of Reference for that working group (at Appendix 1).
- (4) That Officers be authorised, in consultation with the Working Group, to develop a

communication and engagement plan for Members, Parish Councils, residents and other stakeholders to maximise participation in the Electoral Review.

- (5) That the Members' Working Group, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, be authorised to prepare the necessary submissions to the LGBCE for consideration and approval by the Standards & General Purpose Committee.
- (6) That consideration of the decision for the Community Governance Review for High Wycombe and Longwick-cum-Ilmer be deferred until the completion of the Electoral Review or until such time as the LGBCE considered it appropriate, whichever is the sooner.
- (7) That, in accordance with the LGBCE advice, consideration of any future Community Governance Review requests should only be approved in very exceptional circumstances during the period of the Electoral Review.

7 PROCEDURES FOR INQUORATE PARISH COUNCILS

The Committee received a report seeking adoption and approval by Buckinghamshire Council of a procedure so that it could carry out its powers to appoint temporary members to inquorate parish councils. This included authority for the Service Director Legal and Democratic to make Orders under the legislation.

Members were informed that a Parish Council had to be quorate in order to operate and make decisions. A quorum for parish councils was defined as being one third of its membership, but not less than three. There were occasions where due to resignations or lack of applications for vacancies at an election, a parish council was unable to operate because it was inquorate. The inability to operate would extend to making all decisions including the co-option of sufficient councillors to fill vacancies.

Under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council had power to make an Order appointing temporary members to a parish council where, due to the number of vacancies, the council could not function. The exercise of functions in relation to parish councils had been delegated to the Standard and General Purposes Committee. The appointees would usually be appointed from the ward members of the principal authority and it was good administrative practise to adopt a procedure for delegating these appointments and the making of the necessary Order to a senior officer, so they can be made promptly, where necessary.

The Committee was informed that It had been necessary for Cabinet to adopt a procedure and authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to make such an Order in relation to Kingsbrook Parish Council, which had been created by the Aylesbury Vale (Community Governance Review) Order 2020. The new parish of Kingsbrook had been established with effect from 7 May 2020. However, due to the emergency measures introduced following the outbreak of coronavirus, it had not been possible to hold local elections to elect Councillors to the new Parish Council. This had left Kingsbrook Parish Council inquorate and unable to function.

In order to enable Kingsbrook Parish Council to start operating, Cabinet on 21 April 2020 had approved the procedure set out at Appendix 1 and authorised the Deputy Chief Executive to make an Order under section 91 to appoint a sufficient number of parish councillors on a temporary basis to enable Kingsbrook Parish Council to start operating.

On 13 May 2020, an Order had been made under section 91, a copy of which is attached as

Appendix 2, to appoint 4 Buckinghamshire Councillors as temporary Kingsbrook Parish Councillors. The first meeting of Kingsbrook Parish Council had been held on 18 June 2020 and had successfully co-opted 5 people as Parish Councillors. The appointments under the section 91 Order have therefore now ceased and the co-opted members can now sit and make decisions as the new Parish Council which will include the co-option of 4 further members.

Members sought additional information and were informed that Officers would consult with local Members and Group Leaders before any making any Section 91 orders.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the procedure set out in Appendix 1 for making appointments to inquorate parish councils under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 be approved and adopted.
- (2) That the current position in relation to Kingsbrook Parish Council be noted, including that an Order under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 had been made on 13 May, 2020, to appoint temporary Parish Councillors to that Parish Council.

8 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/21

The Committee received a report on their future work programme, which was updated during the course of the meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the future work programme be approved, as follows:

8 October 2020

1. Update on draft LGA Model Code of Conduct.
2. Guidance on Requests for Dispensations.
3. LGO Complaint Report
4. Standards Complaints (Update)
5. Constitution Review Report
6. Electoral Review Members' Working Group (update)

10 December 2020

1. Protocol on the Role of the Monitoring Officer.
2. Review of Social Media Guidance for Councillors.
3. Review of Member Induction and Training on standards of conduct
4. Electoral Review Members' Working Group (update)

8 April 2021

1. Annual Review of Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure.
2. Standards Complaints Monitoring Report 2020/21.
3. LGO Annual Report.
4. Electoral Review Members' Working Group (update)
5. Draft Work programme for 2021/22.