



## Borough of Telford and Wrekin

### Governance Committee

Friday 28 March 2025

4.00 pm

Council Chamber, Third Floor,  
Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

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**Democratic Services:** Lorna Gordon / Millie Wallace 01952 384978 / 381542

**Media Enquiries:** Corporate Communications 01952 382406

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**Committee Members:** Councillors A S Jhawar (Chair), A R H England (Vice-Chair), P Davis, S Davies, S J Reynolds, W L Tomlinson, R Tyrrell and O Vickers

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<b>2.0</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b>	<b>3 - 6</b>
	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 October 2024.	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Councillor Connect Update</b>	<b>Verbal Report</b>
	For Members to receive an update on the Councillor Connect portal.	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>National Cases Update</b>	<b>Verbal Report</b>
	To receive an update on standards related cases nationally.	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Standards Cases Update</b>	<b>7 - 12</b>

For Members to consider standards cases from across the Borough.

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Telford & Wrekin  
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest  
to create a better borough

## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of a meeting of the Governance Committee held on Wednesday 2 October 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

**Present:** Councillors A S Jhawar (Chair), P Davis, S Davies, S J Reynolds, W L Tomlinson, R Tyrrell and O Vickers

**In Attendance:** L Gordon (Member Support Officer) and R Phillips (Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy Service Delivery Manager)

**Apologies:** Councillor A R H England

#### **GOV8 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Arnold England and Julia Lynch.

#### **GOV9 Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **GOV10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED –** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair

#### **GOV11 Terms of Reference 2024/25 - Governance Committee**

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy provided the Committee with an overview of the updated Terms of Reference of the Governance Committee for the 2024/35 municipal year.

The Committee were advised that at the Annual General Meeting of Council each Committee had been given delegated authority to confirm their own Terms of Reference. Members were asked to note that there had been no changes for 2024/2025.

**RESOLVED –** that the Terms of Reference for Governance Committee be agreed and reconfirmed.

#### **GOV12 Governance Committee Forward Plan 2024/2025**



The Mayor & Member Support Officer provided Members of the Committee with an overview of the Governance Committee Forward plan for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

Members heard that the forward plan set out future agenda items to be brought to the Committee. The Mayor & Member Support Officer highlighted that the Terms of Reference for the Committee outlined that it had oversight over the Council's Constitution, Standards and the Code of Conduct, and Member Development. Members heard how the forward plan set out how each of these areas would be addressed by the Committee over the course of the municipal year. It was noted that the forward plan was subject to change should any urgent matters arise.

**RESOLVED** - that the Governance Committee Forward Plan 2024/2025 be reviewed and agreed.

### **GOV13    Member Support Update**

Members heard that since the last meeting of the Committee in April 2024, the focus of the Member Training and Development Programme had been required learning. The Mayor & Member Support Officer advised that this had included hosting repeat sessions for committee specific training such as Audit and Planning Committees that Members were required to complete prior to being allowed to sit on that Committee. There were also additional plans for a further Planning training session and an Appeals Committee session for those Members who had not yet received training. Members were asked to note that repeat sessions for other required learning modules such as the role of Councillors as a corporate parent had also already taken place. The Mayor and Member Support Officer informed Members that these repeat sessions would continue towards the end of the municipal year, with an additional focus on sessions highlighted by Members in their feedback.

The Mayor and Member Support Officer reiterated how important Member feedback was to ensure an engaging and robust training programme. The Committee heard that in pursuit of continued improvement of the programme, all Members were to be asked to complete a brief feedback questionnaire at the next full council meeting in November 2024. Members were advised that the questions were to be focused on overall satisfaction with the training programme, preferred training delivery methods, and a request for suggestions as to what could be changed or added to the Member training and support offer.

Members commented that the current Member Development Programme was more comprehensive than any previous training provided by the Council. The Committee noted that the process of Councillor induction had been more thorough and engaging, with additions such as the Directorates showcase



having a significant impact for Councillors who were elected for their first term in office in May 2023.

During the discussion Members expressed that having a combination of both in person and virtual training sessions had been beneficial, however added that having pre-recorded or online training modules would provide even greater flexibility for Members to access training at their own convenience via Councillor Connect.

The Mayor and Member Support Officer thanked the Committee for their comments and continued support for the Member Training and Development Programme.

**GOV14 Annual Report on the Committee for Standards in Public Life 2024/2025**

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy informed Members of the Committee that each year the committee was required to receive the Annual Report of the Committee for Standards in Public life.

Members discussed the contents of the report and noted that this was particularly interesting in the context of updated legislation.

**RESOLVED** – that the Governance Committee note the contents of Annual Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

**GOV15 Constitution Update**

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy provided the Committee with an update on the ongoing work to make the Council's Constitution more accessible to Members, officers and the public. Members heard that significant work had been undertaken by an external solicitor, who had confirmed that the information outlined in the constitution was correct.

The Committee were advised that as the final part of their review, the external solicitor were still to check the contract procedurals around finance and procurement based on updated government legislation. Once this review is completed, the Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy informed Members that the revised constitution would be brought back to the Governance Committee for comment, following which the Committee will then be asked to recommend the updated constitution to full council.

Members noted the update.



## **GOV16    National Cases Update**

The Service Delivery Manager: Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy provider Members of the Committee with two recent examples of Councillor code of conduct breaches nationally. These examples included a West Suffolk Councillor who failed to comply with the sanctions imposed on them after breaching the code of conduct, which resulted in the breach being reported to full council. The other case involved a Councillor from Pendle Council who was found to have disrespected fellow council members by the Standards Committee. The councillor involved was required to issue an apology.

Members noted the update.

The meeting ended at 6.23 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:**            Wednesday 15 January 2025



## Borough of Telford and Wrekin

### Governance Committee

Friday 28 March 2025

### Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints Update

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<b>Lead Director:</b>	Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy & Governance
<b>Service Area:</b>	Policy & Governance
<b>Report Author:</b>	Richard Phillips - Service Delivery Manager, Legal & Democracy
<b>Officer Contact Details:</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 01952 383241 <b>Email:</b> richard.phillips@telford.gov.uk
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Not Key Decision
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Report considered by:</b>	Governance Committee – 28 March 2025

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#### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

Governance Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the update on complaints received under the Councillor Code of Conduct during the 2024/25 municipal year.

#### 2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The report provides an update on the activity of the Council's Monitoring Officer (and her Deputy Monitoring Officers) in relation to complaints received under the Councillor Code of Conduct arrangements during the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

#### 3.0 Background

- 3.1 Full Council adopted the LGA Model Code of Conduct in July 2021. Since that time, it has been used by the Monitoring Officer when complaints are made about the conduct of elected members across the Borough. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring the Code of Conduct is upheld and for dealing with

complaints made pursuant to the Code of Conduct about Borough Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors from across the Borough.

3.2 Complaints are dealt with, in accordance with the arrangements for Standards Complaints and Investigation Process which were adopted by the Council in September 2022.

#### **4.0 Complaints received during the 2024/25 Municipal Year**

4.1 Governance Committee has oversight of the Council's ethical governance framework and arrangements for dealing with complaints received under the Code of Conduct in relation to elected Members.

4.2 The table at Appendix A provides anonymised details in relation to the complaints received during the Municipal Year, including a brief synopsis of the nature of the complaint and the outcome.

#### **5.0 Alternative Options**

5.1 There are no alternative options in relation to this report. Whilst it is not a legal requirement to report the numbers of complaints made to the Monitoring Officer, it is considered best practice to do so.

#### **6.0 Key Risks**

6.1 There are no risk associated with this report.

#### **7.0 Council Priorities**

7.1 The provision of this information promotes the following Council objective:

- A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

#### **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The activity of the Monitoring Officer in relation to the Code of Conduct is met from existing budgets.

#### **9.0 Legal and HR Implications**

9.1 The Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) and the Localism Act 2011 set out the Council's legal obligations in respect of conduct by elected Members. This includes the requirement to have a Code of Conduct, for the Monitoring Officer to have oversight of compliance with the Code of Conduct, to appoint at least one Independent Person to consult with regarding complaints and the applicable sanctions should a breach of the Code of Conduct be found to have taken place.



**10.0 Ward Implications**

10.1 There are no direct ward implications arising from this report.

**11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

11.1 There are no direct health, social and economic implications arising from this report.

**12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

12.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

**13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

13.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

**14.0 Background Papers**

- 1 Code of Conduct for Elected Members - [https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20242/councillors\\_and\\_mps/358/councillor\\_code\\_of\\_conduct](https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20242/councillors_and_mps/358/councillor_code_of_conduct)
- 2 Standards Complaints and Investigation Process - [https://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/845/process\\_for\\_making\\_a\\_complaint\\_about\\_a\\_councillor](https://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/845/process_for_making_a_complaint_about_a_councillor)

**15.0 Appendices**

- A Complaints received during the 2024/25 Municipal Year

**16.0 Report Sign Off**

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Legal	19/03/2025	20/03/2025	RP

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**Appendix A – Code of Conduct Complaints 2024/2025 Municipal Year**

<b>Complaint Received</b>	<b>Borough/Town/Parish</b>	<b>Complainant</b>	<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
May 2024	Parish	Member of the Public	Breach of Code of Conduct alleged in relation to the use of social media.	Complaint not progressed as subject no longer a Councillor.
September 2024	Borough & Parish	Member of the Public	Breach of Code of Conduct alleged in relation to bias in decision making.	No breach of the Code of Conduct found at initial determination.
October 2024	Borough & Parish	Member of the Public	Breach of the Code of Conduct alleged in relation to bullying and harassment.	Complainant failed to provide details of the complaint. Complaint not progressed.
October 2024	Borough & Parish	Member of the Public	Breach of the Code of Conduct concerning activities in the community.	Complainant failed to provide rationale for anonymity. Complaint not progressed.
October 2024	Borough & Parish	Organisation	Breach of the Code of Conduct concerning activities in the community.	Complainant failed to provide details of the complaint. Complaint not progressed
October 2024	Borough & Parish	Organisation	Breach of the Code of Conduct concerning activities in the community.	Complainant failed to provide details of the complaint. Complaint not progressed
November 2024	Parish	Clerk	Breach of Code of Conduct alleged in relation to bullying and harassment.	No breach of Code of Conduct as not acting in capacity as Councillor.
November 2024	Parish and Borough	Councillor	Breach of Code of Conduct in relation to interests.	Not progressed by Monitoring Officer as no jurisdiction.
November 2024	Parish and Borough	Councillor	Breach of Code of Conduct in relation to interests.	Not progressed by Monitoring Officer as no jurisdiction.
December 2024	Borough	Member of the Public	Breach of the Code of Conduct alleged in relation to the use of social media.	Complaint withdrawn.

**Appendix A – Code of Conduct Complaints 2024/2025 Municipal Year**

December 2024	Borough	Member of the Public	Breach of the Code of Conduct alleged in relation to conduct at a meeting and voting despite interests.	No breach of the Code of Conduct found at initial determination.
December 2024	Parish	Councillor	Breach of the Code of Conduct alleged in relation to respect and conduct in relation to meeting processes.	Ongoing
December 2024	Parish	Councillor	Breach of the Code of Conduct alleged in relation to respect and conduct in relation to meeting processes.	Ongoing
December 2024	Parish	Councillor	Breach of the Code of Conduct alleged in relation to respect and conduct in relation to meeting processes.	Ongoing
December 2024	Parish	Councillor	Breach of the Code of Conduct alleged in relation to respect and conduct in relation to meeting processes.	Ongoing
December 2024	Parish	Councillor	Breach of the Code of Conduct alleged and discrimination.	Did not meet Stage 1 threshold and complaint not progressed
December 2024	Parish	Councillor	Breach of the Code of Conduct alleged and discrimination.	Did not meet Stage 1 threshold and complaint not progressed
January 2025	Parish	Member of the Public	Social media activity	Ongoing
January 2025	Parish	Clerk	Social media bullying harassment	Ongoing
January 2025	Councillor	Councillor	Social media activity	Ongoing