

**Notice of meeting of  
Joint Standards Committee Hearings Sub-Committee**

**To:** Councillors Hayes, Kramm, Wiseman, Davies  
(Independent Member) and Laverick (Independent  
Member)

**Date:** Wednesday, 16 January 2019

**Time:** 4.30 pm

**Venue:** The Severus Room - 1st Floor West Offices (F032)

**AGENDA**

**1. Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare:

- Any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests
- Any prejudicial interests or
- Any disclosable pecuniary interests

which they may have in respect of business on this agenda.

**2. Exclusion of Press and Public**

To consider excluding the public and press from the meeting during consideration of agenda item 3 (Complaint against a Member of a Council covered by the Joint Standards Committee - Discussion of Procedural Issues), on the grounds that it contains information relating to an individual. This information is classed as exempt under paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

**3. Urgent Business**

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

In accordance with his powers under urgent business provisions, the Chair has agreed to accept onto the agenda the following item of business, not originally included when the agenda was published:

**a) Public Participation**

It is at this point in the meeting that members of the public who have registered their wish to speak can do so. The deadline for registering is **12.00pm on Wednesday 16 January 2019**.

Members of the public may speak on an item on the agenda or an issue within the Sub-Committee's remit. To register, please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for the meeting (the contact details are available at the foot of the agenda).

Residents are welcome to photograph, film or record Councillors and Officers at all meetings open to the press and public. This includes the use of social media reporting, i.e. tweeting. Anyone wishing to film, record or take photos at any public meeting should contact the Democracy Officer (whose contact details are at the foot of this agenda) in advance of the meeting.

The Council's protocol on Webcasting, Filming & Recording of Meetings ensures that these practices are carried out in a manner both respectful to the conduct of the meeting and all those present. It can be viewed at [http://www.york.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11406/protocol\\_for\\_webcasting\\_filming\\_and\\_recording\\_of\\_council\\_meetings\\_20160809.pdf](http://www.york.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11406/protocol_for_webcasting_filming_and_recording_of_council_meetings_20160809.pdf)

**4. Complaint against a Member of a Council covered by the Joint Standards Committee - Discussion of Procedural Issues (Pages 1 - 58)**

To consider procedural issues in advance of the hearing of a complaint against a member of a council covered by the Joint Standards Committee.

Democracy Officer

Name: Fiona Young

Contact details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551027
- E-mail – [fiona.young@york.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.young@york.gov.uk)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## **Annex 4**

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## Part 1: General Provisions

### Introduction

1. (1) This Code sets out the standards of behaviour required of you whenever you are acting as a Councillor of the City of York Council.
- (2) This Code also applies to any person appointed as a co-opted member of the City Council or any of its Committees when acting as such.
- (3) A person will be acting as a Councillor or as a co-opted member when:
  - Present at formal meetings of the Council.
  - Performing duties entrusted to them by the Council
  - Performing functions associated with the ordinary role of Councillor – such as undertaking casework for residents
  - Otherwise acting, claiming to act or giving the impression that they are acting as a Councillor

But a person will not be acting as a Councillor or as a co-opted member when acting as a trustee or director of another organisation even where the appointment to that role was made by the Council.

- (4) The Code has been adopted by the City Council and is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

### Definitions

2.
  - (1) A “co-opted member”, is a person who is not an elected member of the authority but who –
    - (a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or

(b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority and

in either case is entitled to vote at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee

- (2) "meeting" means a meeting of the Council or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority or of the Executive or any committee of the Executive.
- (3) A "sensitive interest" is one where you consider that disclosure of the details an interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, and the Monitoring Officer agrees.

### **General Duties as to Conduct**

3. (1) You must treat others with respect.
- (2) You must not do anything which may cause the Council to breach any equality enactment.
- (3) You must not bully or intimidate any person, or attempt to bully or intimidate them.
- (4) You must not do anything which compromises the impartiality of anyone who works for or on behalf of the Authority, or do anything that is likely to compromise their impartiality.
- (5) You must not disclose information which is confidential, unless:
- (a) You have the permission of a person authorised to give it; or
- (b) You are required by law to disclose the information; or
- (c) You disclose it to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice, provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or



- (d) The disclosure is reasonable; and is in the public interest; and is made in good faith.
- (6) You must not prevent another person gaining access to information which that person is entitled by law.
- (7) You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the Council into disrepute, or your position as a Councillor into disrepute.
- (8) You must not use your position as a Councillor improperly to obtain any advantage or disadvantage for yourself or any other person, or attempt to do so.
- (9) When you use or authorise the use by others of the resources of the Council you must:
  - (a) abide by the Council's reasonable requirements; and
  - (b) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes); and
  - (c) have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
- (10) You must have regard to relevant advice given by the Council's Chief Financial Officer or Monitoring Officer when making decisions and must give reasons for those decisions, in accordance with any requirements imposed by statute or the Council.

**Part 2: Interests****Disclosable Pecuniary Interests*****Registration of disclosable pecuniary interests***

4. (1) Within 28 days of becoming a member or co-opted member, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of any 'disclosable pecuniary interests'. These will be included in the register of interests which is published on the Council's website

***Definition of disclosable pecuniary interests***

- (2) A 'disclosable pecuniary interest' is an interest of a kind described in the first schedule to this Code. An interest is disclosable if the interest is of yours or of your partner. Your partner means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

***Non participation in items of business in the case of disclosable pecuniary interest***

- (3) Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to one of your disclosable pecuniary interests,
- (a) You may not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting.
  - (b) You may not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting.
  - (c) If the interest is not registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting.
  - (d) If the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

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Note: In addition, Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

***Non participation in individual executive decision making in case of disclosable pecuniary interest***

- (4) Where an Executive Member may discharge a function alone and becomes aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being dealt with or to be dealt with by her/him, the Executive Member must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter.

**Notification of Interests**

5. (1) In addition to the disclosable pecuniary interests you must, notify the Monitoring Officer of any interests you have of a kind described in the second schedule. You must make that notification within 28 days of this Code coming into effect or of you becoming a Member or co-opted Member if that is later.
- (2) You must notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes to these interests or of any new interests within 28 days of becoming aware of them.

**Disclosure of Interests**

6. (1) You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect you, a body named in the second schedule or any person with whom you have a close association.
- (2) If you are present at a meeting and you have a personal interest in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting:
  - (a) If the interest is not registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting.
  - (b) If the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

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- (3) If you have a personal interest and a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it would be likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest then you have a prejudicial interest. This is subject to the exceptions set out in paragraph 6.4.
- (4) You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business:
- (a) does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body named in the second schedule;
  - (b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in the second schedule; or
  - (c) relates to the functions of your authority in respect of;
    - (i) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
    - (ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
    - (iii) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
    - (iv) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
    - (v) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
    - (vi) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

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- (5) A member with a prejudicial interest must leave the room during the debate and voting on the matter in question.

### **Sensitive Interests**

7. (1) If you have a sensitive interest which is entered on the register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register will exclude details of the interest, but may state that you have an interest, the details of which are withheld.
- (2) If you are required to declare a sensitive interest at a meeting you need only declare the fact of the interest and not the details of the interest itself.

### **Dispensations**

8. (1) The Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if he or she has an disclosable pecuniary interest or a prejudicial interest. The Council may grant such a dispensation if:
- It believes that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business; or
  - considers that without the dispensation the representation of different political groups would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business
  - It is in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the member to take part; or
  - It is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.
- (2) The Council has granted the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Joint Standards Committee the power to grant dispensations. These can only be granted following a written request from the Member and the existence of and reason for the dispensation should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

**First Schedule – Interests which are Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

<i>Interest</i>	<i>Description</i>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to your knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial</p>

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	interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— i. the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or ii. if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

These descriptions on interests are subject to the following definitions;

“the Act” means the Localism Act 2011;

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

“land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which you give a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) of the Act;

“relevant person” means you or any your partner as defined in paragraph 4.2

“securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000() and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

### **Second Schedule – Other Interests**

1. Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
2. Any body —
  - (a) exercising functions of a public nature;
  - (b) directed to charitable purposes; or
  - (c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union), of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
3. Any person from whom you have received the offer of a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of more than £50 (whether or not you accept the offer) which is attributable to your position as an elected or co-opted member of the Council.



## **CITY OF YORK COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE HEARING PROCEDURE**

### **General Matters**

1. In this procedure the term “interested parties” is used to cover the complainant, the subject member and the investigating officer. The interested parties will all be invited to attend the hearing as potential witnesses.
2. The Independent Persons will also be invited to attend the hearing in an advisory, non-voting capacity. Their views will be sought as to whether the evidence establishes a breach of the code of conduct and, if so, as to what if any penalty should be imposed.
3. The Hearing Panel will be made up of members of the Standards Committee and there will normally be three members. The Panel will be supported by the Monitoring Officer or his representative and a democratic services officer.
4. The meeting will be open to the press and public unless confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed. The Standards Committee considers that in general the public interest in seeing that complaints relating to Councillors are handled properly will outweigh any considerations relating to the privacy of the Councillor concerned but each case will be considered on its own merits including consideration of the privacy of other parties.
5. The hearing will normally follow the procedure set out below but the Chair has the discretion to vary it at any time. Such a variation may be considered where, for example, the Chair believes that doing so will be in the interests of fairness or help in establishing the facts of the case.
6. It will not usually be necessary for the Subject Member to be represented at a hearing but he or she may choose to arrange such representation which may be by a solicitor or barrister or another person.
7. The Panel may take legal advice at any time during the hearing or during its deliberations. The substance of any advice given to the Panel will normally be shared with the parties.

### **Preliminary procedures**

8. Prior to the hearing commencing the Panel may meet privately to review the material presented and to agree the main lines of enquiry.
9. At the start of the hearing, the Chair will arrange introductions of the Panel, its Officers, the Independent Persons and the interested parties. The Chair will briefly explain the procedure which the Panel will follow in the conduct of the hearing. The Chair will confirm that each interested party has seen the final report of the investigating officer and has had the opportunity to engage in the pre hearing procedures.
10. The Monitoring Officer will identify whether the pre hearing procedures have identified any significant disagreements about the facts contained in the Investigating Officer's report. The Panel will record the agreed facts and establish the facts in dispute which they will be required to rule upon.
11. If a party raises an issue which has not been raised previously then that party shall be required to give a full explanation to the Panel as to why it was not raised earlier. The Panel may then:
  - a. Consider whether or not to allow the issue that has been raised to be dealt with at the hearing
  - b. Consider whether the hearing should be adjourned for further investigations to take place.

### **Determining factual disputes**

12. If there are disputed facts which the Panel consider relevant to establishing whether the Code has been breached or as to the seriousness of the breach then, the Panel will adopt an inquisitorial approach in establishing the facts. The Chair will invite members of the Panel to ask questions of the interested parties or any other

potential witness present. The Monitoring Officer may also ask questions.

13. Once a witness has answered questions from the Panel then the Chair will ask the interested parties whether there are other issues which ought properly to be raised with the witness. The Chair (or another Member) may put any such issues to the witness him or herself or may allow the relevant party to ask questions directly.
14. The Panel must reach a decision as to the facts it finds to be proven. The Panel must also make a decision as to whether the proven facts (including those which are agreed) show a breach of the code of conduct. Depending on the complexity of the case the Panel may consider each of those issues separately or deal with them together. In either case the Chair will invite the parties to make representations on each matter before the Panel reaches its decision.

### **Panel deliberations**

15. When the Panel is considering its finding of facts and whether those facts amount to a breach of the Code of conduct it will do so in private but in the presence of the Monitoring Officer, the Independent persons and the Democratic Services officer.
16. At the conclusion of the Panel's deliberations, the Chair will publicly announce the Panel's findings as to the facts and as to whether those facts show a breach of the code of conduct. The Panel will give reasons for their findings. It will be normal practice to share the substance of any advice given by the Monitoring Officer and Independent persons at this stage.

### **Determining Sanctions**

17. If the Panel concludes that the Subject Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Chair will invite representations from the interested parties as to what action, if any, it should take.
18. The Panel will then consider whether to impose a sanction, and, if so, what sanction to impose and when that sanction should take effect. It will do so in private but in the presence of the Monitoring

Officer, the Independent persons and the Democratic Services officer.

19. The sanctions available to the Hearings Panel are to –
- Censure the Councillor;
  - Formally report its findings to the City Council or Parish Council for information;
  - Recommend to the Councillor's Group Leader (or in the case of un-grouped Councillors, recommend to Council or to Committees) that he/she be removed from any or all Panels or Sub-Committees of the Council;
  - Recommend to the Leader of the Council that the Councillor be removed from the Cabinet, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities;
  - Recommend to Council that the Leader be removed from Office (if it is the Leader's conduct that is being considered)
  - Instruct the Monitoring Officer to *[or recommend that the Parish Council]* arrange training for the Councillor;
  - Remove *[or recommend to the Parish Council that the Councillor be removed]* from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the authority *[or by the Parish Council]*;
  - Withdraw *[or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws]* facilities provided to the Councillor by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access.
20. The Hearings Panel has no power to suspend or disqualify the Councillor or to withdraw Councillors' basic or special responsibility allowances. If the Panel decides to withdraw facilities from the Councillor it must ensure that the Councillor is not thereby prevented from undertaking his/her representative duties.

21. The Chair will publicly announce the decision of the Panel. The substance of any further advice given by the Independent Person and Monitoring Officer will also be shared. Written notice of the findings of the Panel will be given as soon as is reasonably practicable to the Subject Member. They will also be placed on the council's website. If the complaint was against the Subject Member as a parish councillor, written notice of the findings of the Panel will be sent to the clerk to the parish council.

**Other action**

22. The Panel may also consider making any recommendations to the Council concerned with a view to promoting higher standards of conduct among its members.

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## City of York Council Joint Standards Committee Assessment Criteria for complaints

### 1. Background and Context

1.1 The Joint Standards Committee's arrangements for dealing with complaints are described in more detail in a separate document available from the Monitoring Officer and on the City Council's website.

1.2 The first decision to be made when a complaint is received is whether or not it should be referred for investigation. That decision is normally made by the Monitoring Officer but may be made by a Sub Committee of Members of the Standards Committee. In making the decision regard will be had to the following criteria.

### 2. Is the complaint covered by the Code?

2.1 Is the complaint about the conduct of a member?

*The complaint must relate to one or more named elected or co-opted members of the district or parish councils covered by the Standard Committee i.e. within the City of York Council Area.*

2.2 Was the named member in office at the time the alleged misconduct took place?

2.3 Does the allegation relate to the Member's conduct as a Councillor?

*Complaints which relate to a Councillor's private life rather than their Council business are unlikely to be covered by the Code.*

2.4 If the complaint is proven, would there be a breach of the Code under which the member was operating at the time of the alleged misconduct?

*Codes of Conduct are concerned with Members' ethical behaviour. Sometimes complaints are received about decisions which Councillors have made or about the quality of service provided by a Councillor. These are unlikely to be covered by the Code.*

2.5 If the complaint is not covered by the Code then it cannot be

investigated.

### **3. Sufficiency of Information**

3.1 The complainant must provide sufficient information to show that there is a real possibility that there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct. If insufficient information is available the case will not normally be referred for investigation.

### **4. Seriousness of the Complaint**

4.1 A complaint will not normally be referred for investigation or other action where the complaint appears to be trivial, vexatious, malicious, politically motivated or tit for tat.

### **5. Length of Time Which Has Elapsed**

5.1 A complaint will not normally be investigated where the events took place more than 6 months prior to the complaint being submitted. An exception to this may arise where the conduct relates to a pattern of behaviour which has recently been repeated.

### **6. Public Interest**

6.1 Consideration will be given as to whether the public interest would be served by referring a complaint for investigation or other action. They may consider that the public interest would not be served where, for instance, a member has died, resigned or is seriously ill.

6.2 The Standards Committee encourages informal resolution of complaints where it is in the public interest to do so. In some cases a speedy apology to the complainant may be the most effective outcome. In a case where the Code has been breached through ignorance an acceptance of fault from the Councillor together with an offer of training or a briefing from the Monitoring Officer, may be sufficient.

6.3 If the complaint has already been the subject of an investigation or other action relating to the Code of Conduct or the subject of an investigation by other regulatory authorities, it is unlikely that it will be referred for investigation or other action unless it is evident that the public interest will be served by further action being taken.



## **7. Anonymous Complaints**

7.1 Anonymous complaints will not normally be entertained unless there is additional documentary evidence to support the complaint.

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