

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Standards Committee held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices,
Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF
on Wednesday, 5th March, 2025 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dominic Griffiths.

2 MINUTES - 23 OCTOBER 2024

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 23 October 2024 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy this meeting would be recorded.
- (2) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (3) The Chair advised for the purpose of clarification Clause 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution does not apply to this meeting.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

6 STANDARDS MATTERS REPORT

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- (1) Noted the content of the report and makes any suggestions on future actions.
- (2) Noted the changes to the Standards Committee's local remit and potential changes in future following the publishing of the English Devolution White Paper.
- (3) Requested that the completion figures of mandatory training for Members (Safeguarding and Data Protection) be added to future Standards Matters reports.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure good governance within the Council and keep the Committee abreast of changes locally and nationally.

7 ANNUAL WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY REVIEW

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- (1) Considered and noted the Annual Report, together with the actions proposed post benchmarking.

Wednesday, 5th March, 2025

- (2) Approved the Whistleblowing Policy, Appendix 1, in relation to anonymous allegations, as amended, as follows:

Page 30 of agenda item:

~~“Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but~~ will be considered at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer.”

“In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- *the seriousness of the issues raised;*
- *the credibility of the concern;*
- *the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources and;*
- *the reasoning behind wanting to remain anonymous.*

Please remember that if you do not tell us who you are (and are therefore raising a concern anonymously) it will may be difficult for us to look into the matter...”

- (3) Requested that the Whistleblowing Policy be included within the Code of Conduct training, which was mandatory for Members to complete.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) Good practice indicates that the Whistleblowing Policy should be reviewed annually. It affords the opportunity to comment on and improve arrangements at the Council.
- (2) To ensure Members are aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and their role within the Policy.
- (3) To use wording that encourages Council employees to use the Whistleblowing Policy as often as required.