

# STANDARDS COMMITTEE CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

<b>Council</b>	30 March 2023
<b>Report Author</b>	Peter Tucker (Co-opted Independent Member)
<b>Status</b>	For Decision
<b>Classification:</b>	Unrestricted
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Ward:</b>	Thanet Wide

## Executive Summary:

The Chair's annual report summarises and comments on the work of the Standards Committee for the period April 2022 - March 2023.

## Recommendation(s):

That members note the report.

## Corporate Implications

### Financial and Value for Money

There are no financial or value for money implications arising from this report.

### Legal

The role of the Standards Committee is to promote high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct who adopted the Kent Members Code of conduct in 2021. The Code of Conduct is adopted under section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 and is based on the 7 principles of Public life under section 28(1) of the Localism Act.

This report relates to the Committee's function to monitor the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct.

### Corporate

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## **Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty**

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -

- *To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*
- *To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it*
- *To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.*

## **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- *Communities*

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This is my Annual Report as chair of the Standards Committee

1.2 It is pleasing to say that none of the complaints made required a formal investigation therefore saving the Council unnecessary expenditure.

1.3. With the advent of local elections new members will need advising of the work of the Standards Committee and be made aware of the Council Code of Conduct and declarations of interest.

## 2. Membership

### 2.0 Constitutional Review Working Party (CRWP)

Committee agenda papers and minutes are available on the Council's website ([www.thanet.gov.uk](http://www.thanet.gov.uk)). Attendance details for 2022/23 are as follows:

	Members	1st September 2022	28th February 2023
C	Peter Tucker	✓	✓
O	Councillor Ashbee	✓	✓
M	Councillor Austin	✓	✓
M	Councillor Hopkinson	Ab	N/A
I	Councillor Hart	✓	N/A
T	Councillor Potts	Ab	Ab
E	Councillor Kup	N/A	✓
E	Councillor Currie	N/A	✓
	Michael Clarke	✓	A
M	Peter Lorenzo	✓	✓
E	Carolyn Ruston	Ab	A
M			
B			
E			
R			
S			

2.1 CRWP met on 1 September 2022 and 28 February 2023. The Working Party discussed the following: Revised Members Code of Conduct, Revised Complaints Arrangements and the start times of evening council meetings.

### 3.0 Standards Committee

2.2 The Standards Committee meetings scheduled for 31 May 2022, 13 September 2022 and 9 March 2023 were cancelled due to lack of business. The Standards Committee meeting of 10 March 2022 discussed the Revision to Delegations, Amendments to the Leaders Report, Questions from Members to Council and Standards Complaint Statistics. Furthermore, the 10 November 2022 meeting discussed the Revised Members Code of Conduct, the Revised Complaints Arrangements and the Standards Complaints Statistics.

Committee agenda papers and minutes are available on the Council's website ([www.thanet.gov.uk](http://www.thanet.gov.uk)). Attendance details for 2022/23 are as follows:

	Members	10th March 2022	31st May 2022	13th September 2022	10th November 2022	9th March 2023
C O M M I T T E E M E M B E R S	Peter Tucker	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Councillor J. Bayford	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Councillor Braidwood	AB	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Councillor Crittenden	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Councillor Dexter	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Councillor Duckworth	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	N/A	Cancelled
	Councillor Fellows	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Councillor Kup	A	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Councillor Scobie	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Parish Councillor Quittenden	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Parish Councillor Crow-Brown	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	A	Cancelled
	Peter Lorenzo	✓	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled
	Carolyn Ruston	N/A	Cancelled	Cancelled	A	Cancelled
	Michael Clarke	N/A	Cancelled	Cancelled	✓	Cancelled

### 3.0 Complaints about Member Behaviour Considered by a Standards Sub Committee of Thanet District Council 2022/23

3.1 The Council received 14 complaints raised under the Members' Code of Conduct between 01 March 2022 and 01 March 2023.

3.2 Of the 14 complaints received in this period;-

- 1 considered to not be a standards complaint;
- 1 was remained outstanding;
- 1 was withdrawn;
- 7 were considered not to meet the jurisdiction test; and
- 4 cases were therefore progressed for consideration by a sub-committee.

3.3 Of those 4 complaints progressed to the sub-committee, all 4 were considered to be suitable for the informal resolution process. The sub-committee made various recommendations back to the complainants and subject members. No complaints were referred for further investigation.

3.4 The sub-committee dealt with a number of complaints from both councillors and members of the public about posts on social media sites.

- 3.5. The Standards Committee recruited two new Independent Members who were Ms Carolyn Ruston and Mr Michael Clarke.

## **4.0 Thanks**

- 4.1. I would like to express my thanks to officers in Democratic Services, Members of the Standards Committee for their dedication including the Independent Members. I would also like to thank the Independent Person for the work he undertook.

### **Annex List**

*Annex 1: List of Complaints 2022*

### **Background Papers**

*None*

### **Corporate Consultation**

**Finance: Chris Blundell (Acting Deputy Chief Executive)**

**Legal: Sameera Khan (Interim Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer)**