



South Somerset
District Council

Standards Committee (Informal)

Tuesday 1st March 2022

2.00 pm

**Virtual Meeting
using Zoom meeting software**

Members listed over the page are requested to attend the meeting.

Any members of the public wishing to address the meeting at Public Question Time need to email democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk by 9.00am on 28 February.

The meeting will be viewable online by selecting the committee meeting at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSDst3IHGj9WoGnwJGF_soA

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact
democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Monday 21 February 2022.

Jane Portman, *Chief Executive Officer*

This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk

Standards Committee Membership

SSDC Councillors

Hayward Burt
Nicola Clark

Peter Gubbins
Jenny Kenton

Sue Osborne
1 Vacancy

Co-opted Town/Parish Council Representatives (non-voting members of the Standards Committee)

Vacancy.

The Independent Persons are also invited to attend meetings (not members of the Standards Committee):

Christopher Borland and Peter Forrester

Information for the Public

In light of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), Scrutiny Committee will meet virtually via video-conferencing to consider reports. As of 7 May 2021 some interim arrangements are in place for committee meetings.

At the meeting of Full Council on 15 April 2021 it was agreed to make the following changes to the Council's Constitution:

- a) To continue to enable members to hold remote, virtual meetings using available technology;
- b) To amend Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council's Constitution to allow those remote meetings to function as consultative bodies and delegate decisions, including Executive and Quasi-Judicial decisions, that would have been taken by those meetings if the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 had continued in force to the Chief Executive (or the relevant Director in the Chief Executive's absence) in consultation with those meetings and those members to whom the decision would otherwise have been delegated under Part 3 of the Constitution;
- c) The delegated authority given under (b) will expire on 31 July 2021 unless continued by a future decision of this Council;

For full details and to view the report please see -

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=2981&Ver=4>

Further to the above, at the meeting of Full Council on 8 July 2021, it was agreed to extend the arrangements for a further 6 months to 8 January 2022. For full details and to view the report please see -

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=3033&Ver=4>

Further to the above, at the meeting of Full Council on 16 December 2021, it was agreed to extend the arrangements for a further 6 months to 8 July 2022 for all meetings apart from Full Council - Full Council will be in person. For full details and to view the report please see:

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=2991&Ver=4>

Standards Committee

Meetings of Standards Committee usually are held as required.

Agendas and minutes can also be viewed via the mod.gov app (free) available for iPads and Android devices. Search for 'mod.gov' in the app store for your device, install, and select 'South Somerset' from the list of publishers, then select the committees of interest. A wi-fi signal will be required for a very short time to download an agenda but once downloaded, documents will be viewable offline.

Public participation at meetings (held via Zoom)

Public question time

We recognise that these are challenging times but we still value the public's contribution to our virtual meetings. If you would like to participate and contribute in the meeting, you will need to be able to join on-line through Zoom (<https://zoom.us/join>).

If you would like to address the virtual meeting during Public Question Time, please register to speak by emailing democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk by 9.00am on Monday 28 February 2022. When you have registered, the Chairman will invite you to speak at the appropriate time during the virtual meeting.

The period allowed for participation in Public Question Time shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the Chairman and members of the Committee. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.

If you would like to view the meeting without participating, please select the meeting on the South Somerset District Council YouTube channel at :

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSDst3IHGj9WoGnwJGF_soA

Virtual meeting etiquette:

- Consider joining the meeting early to ensure your technology is working correctly.
- Please note that we will mute all public attendees to minimise background noise. If you have registered to speak during the virtual meeting, the Chairman will remind you to un-mute your microphone at the appropriate time.
- Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.
- When speaking, keep your points clear and concise.

- Please speak clearly – the Councillors are interested in your comments.

Recording and photography at council meetings

Recording of council meetings is permitted, however anyone wishing to do so should let the Chairperson of the meeting know prior to the start of the meeting. The recording should be overt and clearly visible to anyone at the meeting, but non-disruptive. If someone is recording the meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting.

Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. If anyone making public representation does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairperson know.

The full 'Policy on Audio/Visual Recording and Photography at Council Meetings' can be viewed online at:

<http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s3327/Policy%20on%20the%20recording%20of%20council%20meetings.pdf>

Terms of Reference

- promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members;
- advise, train or arrange to train Members and Co-opted Members of the Council on matters relating to the Authority's Members' Code of Conduct and wider propriety issues, including issuing guidance where appropriate;
- recommend the adoption or revision of any Council Codes of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members, and to monitor the operation of such code(s) of conduct;
- deal with the assessment and determination of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct relating to Members and Co-opted Members (other than where the power to deal with such matters has been delegated to and exercised by the Monitoring Officer). Where the investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and a local resolution is not appropriate or not possible, then a Hearing Panel of the Committee (comprising 3 voting members of the Standards Committee agreed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Committee Chairman) will consider and decide the complaint.
- to take decisions in respect of a Member and Co-opted Member who is found on hearing to have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, including –
 - Reporting its findings to Council [or to the Parish Council] for information;
 - Recommending to the member's Group Leader that he/she be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council (other than the relevant Area Committee);
 - Recommending to the Leader of the Council that the member be removed from the District Executive Committee, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities;
 - Instructing the Monitoring Officer to [or recommend that the Parish Council] arrange training for the member;
 - Removing [or recommend to the Parish Council that the member be removed] from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the authority [or by the Parish Council];
 - Withdrawing [or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws] facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access;
 - Restricting contact to named officers or requiring contact be through named officers; or
 - Excluding [or recommend that the Parish Council exclude] the member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.
- advise on the management of statutory and other registers of interest and gifts / hospitality received;
- advise the Council on possible changes to the Constitution (except the Council and Cabinet Schemes of Delegation) in relation the key documents and protocols dealing with members conduct and ethical standards.

Standards Committee (Informal)

Tuesday 1 March 2022

Agenda

1. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 July 2020. The draft minutes can be viewed at:

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=146&Year=0>

2. Apologies for absence

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (as amended 26 February 2015), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. Where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council.

4. Public question time

Items for Discussion

5. New Somerset Council - Proposed Members Code of Conduct (Pages 7 - 31)

6. Update on Revisions to the Member / Officer Protocol (Page 32)

7. Standards Committee Forward Plan (Page 33)

8. Exclusion of Press and Public (Page 34)

9. Verbal Update on Complaints about Members (Confidential) (Page 35)