

# Broads Authority

10 May 2024

Agenda item number 16

## Annual Report of the Standards Committee

Report by Senior Governance Officer

---

### Purpose

To provide an overview of the work of the Standards Committee and information on complaints under the Members Code of Conduct.

### Recommended decision

To note the report.

---

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. As Members will be aware, in [September 2023](#) the Authority agreed to the establishment of a Standards Committee. Creation of this Committee was one of the recommendations of the report of Mark Heath, which the Authority accepted and approved at its meeting on [20 January 2023](#). The principal purpose of this Committee is the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct within the Authority. A key function of the Committee is to deal with complaints under the Code of Conduct. The Committee is scheduled to meet once per annum, with additional meetings convened as necessary.
- 1.2. The Localism Act 2011 requires all local authorities, including the Broads Authority and national park authorities, to have an adopted Code of Conduct for members and to have appropriate procedure in place for dealing with complaints made under the Code.
- 1.3. The Act states:
  - (1) A relevant authority must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.
  - (2) In discharging its duty under subsection (1), a relevant authority must, in particular, adopt a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the authority when they are acting in that capacity.

Section 28

- (6) A relevant authority other than a parish council must have in place—
  - (a) arrangements under which allegations can be investigated, and
  - (b) arrangements under which decisions on allegations can be made.
- 1.4. The responsibility for all issues of probity and conduct must sit with either the Authority as a whole or a separately constituted committee. Most local authorities have adopted a separate Standards Committee
- 1.5. Under its terms of reference, the Committee is required to produce an annual report on its work to the Broads Authority.

## 2. Update

- 2.1. The following Members were appointed to the Committee: Harry Blathwayt; Stephen Bolt; Peter Dixon; Paul Hayden; Tim Jickells; Kevin Maguire and Michael Scott.
- 2.2. The Committee had its first meeting on [7 March 2024](#). Kevin Maguire was appointed Chair and Stephen Bolt Vice-Chair.
- 2.3. The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided an overview of the role of the Standards Committee, including its various functions, such as responsibility for all matters relating to the Code of Conduct and the Members' Register of Interests. The Committee had an interesting discussion on registering and declaring interests. Members raised some thoughtful questions and commented that this is a complex area and a subject which all Members could benefit from further guidance. Officers agreed to make arrangements for a briefing session in due course.
- 2.4. An important role of the Committee is the recruitment of the Independent Person and this was discussed at the meeting on 7 March. A separate report on this matter is included on the agenda for this Broads Authority meeting.

## 3. Complaints under the Code of Conduct

- 3.1. No complaints were made under the Code of Conduct during the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
- 3.2. The Committee agreed that, from now on, the Chair should be advised once a complaint is received.

## 4. Future work programme

- 4.1. The current Member Code of Conduct was adopted by the Authority in July 2021. It is considered good practice to review the Code on a periodic basis and this is something which falls within the remit of the Standards Committee. As part of this, the Committee could also look at the Register of Interests form. The Authority will be aware that a

number of interests must be registered and disclosed by law<sup>1</sup>. In respect of those interests that the Authority has listed as “other interests”, the review can ensure it meets the Authority's requirements and circumstances.

- 4.2. The Authority has an adopted procedure for dealing with complaints under the Code (in December 2022, the procedure was revised following the adoption of a revised Code of Conduct). As part of the establishment of this Committee, this [procedure](#) was reviewed and adopted in September 2023.

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1. Members are asked to note the work undertaken by the Standards Committee.

Author: Sara Utting

Date of report: 24 April 2024

Background papers: none

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: n/a

---

<sup>1</sup> Disclosable Pecuniary Interests are prescribed by The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.