

2.7 Constitution and Ethics Committee

2.7.1 It is advised that Members undertake relevant training in order to hold a seat on the Hearings Panel Sub-committee.

2.7.2 Terms of Reference

2.7.2.1 Authority to oversee the operation of the Council's Constitution and authority to make recommendations to Full Council as to amendments and improvements to the Council's Constitution (including the codes and protocols) subject to the receipt and consideration of a report prepared by the Monitoring Officer, with the exception of those matters under the remit of the Executive.

2.7.2.2 Authority to oversee and approve the operation of the Council's functions relating to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct amongst members and co-opted members of the Council including:

- Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted members;
- Assisting the Members and co-opted members to observe the Code of Conduct;
- Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members Code of Conduct and Officer Code of Conduct;
- Monitoring the operation of the both Codes of Conduct;
- Advising, training or arranging to train Members and co-opted members on matters relating to the Code of Conduct.

2.7.2.3 Authority to approve the granting, to any Council employee, of a dispensation in relation to disqualification from political activities.

2.7.2.4 The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution and Ethics Committee and the Independent Person, may issue dispensations to any member in respect of statutory and non-statutory disclosable interests. The Constitution and Ethics Committee will receive a report on such cases at the next available meeting.

- 2.7.2.5 To make recommendations to Council on the appointment of the Council's Independent Person(s).
- 2.7.2.6 To have oversight of parish councils' codes of conduct and registers of interests, and authority to consider complaints regarding parish councillors.
- 2.7.2.7 To make recommendations to Council in relation the Council's Honour's process and appointment of Honours. Administration of this process is delegated to Executive and Members' Services.

2.7.3 Terms of Reference of the Hearing Panel (Sub-committee to the Constitution and Ethics Committee)

- 2.7.3.1 The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution and Ethics Committee shall appoint, as and when necessary, Hearing Panel Sub-Committees to consider and determine complaints against Members alleging that they have breached the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 2.7.3.2 Hearing Panel Sub-Committees shall comprise three members of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, including either the Chair or Vice-Chair. The membership of the committee shall, as far as practicable, be politically proportionate. The Council's designated Independent Person shall sit alongside the Hearing Panel to offer advice in a non-voting capacity.
- 2.7.3.3 The Hearings Panel is a sub-committee of the Constitution and Ethics Committee. The Panel has the following functions:
- On matters being referred by the Monitoring Officer deciding whether complaints concerning members should be investigated;
 - Hearing and determining complaints that have been referred to them by the Monitoring Officer pursuant to the Complaints procedure;
 - Issuing sanctions where considered appropriate against a member found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct;
 - The agreement of relevant procedures for the undertaking of its functions, when appropriate to be included within the Constitution.
 - To remove a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel in accordance with the provisions set out in its Terms of Reference.