

## **REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE.**

**Councillors Parwaiz Akhtar**

**PORTFOLIO COORDINATING**

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR – LEGAL &  
GOVERNANCE: Asad Laher**

This report updates the Council Forum on the work of the Standards Committee.

### **Register of Members' Interests - New Process**

The Committee on 21 December 2022 considered the legal framework applicable to the registration and declaration of member interests, and the new digital process for submitting and updating the Register of Members' Interests. The Committee also received a presentation of the digital system for submitting and updating the Register of Members' Interests.

There is a requirement under the Localism Act 2011 and the Member's Code of Conduct to register and declare pecuniary and other interests. There are implications (including criminal penalties) for failure to register and declare interests. It is therefore important for Members to register their interests in accordance with the Code, and ensure that it is kept up to date. It is also important for Members to consider and declare interests at meetings and when taking decisions, seeking necessary advice from Legal officers.

In order to assist Members, the Governance team have set a new process for Members to register their interests. This is through Council's Mod.Gov system, which has a facility for registering interests for each Member. This is then populated and published in a table format. Many councils are already using the Mod.Gov system to register and publish their Member interests. This system has now been set up by the Governance team and is accessible for Members to complete and update their interests without requesting a paper form.

The report to the Standards Committee on 21 December 2022 can be viewed from the link:  
[Report - Member Interests Dec 2022.pdf \(blackburn.gov.uk\)](#)

**Recommendation:** The Council formally notes the requirement to register interests and approves the digital process for submitting and updating the Register of Members' Interests.

### **New Council Values & Behaviours.**

The Committee on 21 December 2022 also considered the new Council values and behaviours, and in conjunction with possible review of the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations. The Protocol is contained in Part 5, Section 3 of the Council's Constitution, and its purpose is "...to guide Members and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another". Although the Members' Code of Conduct has been subject to some amendments since its formal adoption in 2012 following recommendations by the Committee, the Protocol has not been reviewed for some time.

At the previous meeting of the Committee, it was presented with the work undertaken in relation to the Council's organisational values: *Trust, Respect, Ambition, Collaboration, Kindness (TRACK)*. A special Member Training session was also held on 12 October 2022 to present these organisational values and behaviours, which has been cascaded to all staff.

The Committee considered the adoption of Council's Values and Behaviours as a reciprocal understanding in their engagement with officers and their incorporation in the Protocol as part of the review.

The report to the Standards Committee on 21 December 2022 can be viewed from the link: [Report - New Values Behaviours.pdf \(blackburn.gov.uk\)](#) ; [App A Protocol on MemberOfficer Relations.pdf \(blackburn.gov.uk\)](#)

**Recommendation:** The Council:

- approves the review of the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations and the incorporation on the Council's organisational values: *Trust, Respect, Ambition, Collaboration, Kindness (TRACK)*.
- notes that the revised draft Protocol on Member/Officer Relations will be reported to Council for consideration and adoption.

**Councillor Parwaiz Akhtar**  
**Chair of Standards Committee**

**January 2023**