

# **BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON AND RESERVE INDEPENDENT PERSONS**

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

##### **1. ABOUT THE COUNCIL**

Bedford Borough Council is made up of 47 Councillors; each elected to serve one of the 28 Wards in the Borough, and an elected Mayor. The present political make-up of the Council (following the May 2023 elections) is: -

• Conservative Group	15
• Green Party	3
• Independent Group	3
• Labour Group	13
• Liberal Democrat Group	13

Elections are held every four years

The Council's budget and its major policies, such as the Corporate Plan, are decided by Full Council. However, the main decision making body is the Executive, which is responsible for decisions about the majority of Council services. There are Executive Members, including the Mayor who provides the political leadership of the Council and chairs meetings of the Executive. There are some Council functions for which the Executive is not responsible, such as decisions on planning, licensing applications and arrangements for Elections, these are dealt with by separate "Regulatory" Committees of Councillors.

In addition to the Full Council and the Executive, the other key Council Committees are:

- (Licensing Act 2003) Licensing Committee
- (Licensing Act 2003) Licensing Sub-Committee
- Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Appointments Committee
- Audit Committee
- Bedford Schools' Forum
- Bedfordshire Local Pension Board
- Budget & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- General Licensing Committee

- General Licensing Sub-Committee
- General Purposes Committee
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Housing Committee
- Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee for Primary and Secondary Education
- Pension Fund Committee
- Planning Committee
- Standards Committee
- Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
- Trustees of the House of Industry Estate Management Committee
- Trustees of the Mayor of Bedford's Charity

The Council has also established, with others, the following joint committees:

- Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel
- Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel Complaints Sub-Committee
- Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Wixams Joint Development Control Committee

## **2. ABOUT THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Council was required to set up a Standards Committee under the Localism Act 2011. The main role of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and to monitor the operation of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

The Council's first Standards Committee was set up in 1998, but this Committee was not established under the Localism Act 2011 (or even the immediately predecessor legislation of the Local Government Act 2000).

The Council's current Standard Committee comprises of seven Members. The members of the Standards Committee are Councillors, drawn from the main political groupings represented on the Council. The Parish Councillors representing the 46 Parish Councils within the Borough have observer status at the Standards Committee. Only the seven Member of the Committee have the right to vote at meetings. The Independent Persons and the Reserve Independent Persons are invited to attend meetings of the Committee and may address the meetings with the consent of the Committee's Chair.

The Council was required by law to adopt a Code of Conduct for Members, which regulates the standards of conduct which its Members must observe. Complaints of a breach of this Code may be reported to the Standards Committee.

The Standards Committee has four scheduled meetings every year to consider such issues as the operation of the Code of Conduct, training and

guidance for Members of the Council, and consultation documents issued by the Government.

The Standards Committee might also meet on other occasions to consider issues that ought not to wait until the next scheduled meeting. Meetings of the Council Committees are usually held at 6.30pm.

The Independent Persons and the Reserve Independent Persons appointed following this recruitment process will receive an allowance in recognition of the need for them to develop and maintain an understanding of the Code of Conduct and the matters likely to be presented to them. For each case referred to the Independent Person there will be an additional payment of £80 in recognition of the need for the Independent Person to review the material/engage with the matter referred to them. The role is initially for a fixed term period of up to 4 years.

Further information on the role can also be found in the Complaints Handling Procedure, which can be found on the Councillor complaints page [here](#).

The Council's Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

Information on how to watch the Council's Virtual Committee Meetings can be found [here](#).