

**RECRUITMENT PACK FOR**

**APPOINTMENT OF**

**CO-OPTED PARISH MEMBERS**

**APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED PARISH MEMBER**

**SUMMARY**

The Standards Committee is looking to recruit and co-opt additional Parish Council Members to:

* assist and advise the Committee in its duty to promote high standards of conduct by all MKCC and Local Councillors; and
* join (in a non-voting capacity) any sub-committees to hear complaints about parish Councillors.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 each council or authority must adopt a Code of Conduct for members. Milton Keynes City Council is also required to have in place arrangements for dealing with complaints in respect of town and parish councillors in its area as well as its own members.

Under each Council’s Code, members are required to complete a register of pecuniary, personal and other interests for publication and take steps to ensure that a conflict of interest does not arise between those interests and the public interest that they serve as a councillor. There are potential criminal sanctions in instances where a councillor has failed to disclose a pecuniary interest.

In addition, each Council’s Code of Conduct should be underpinned by the Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as ‘the Nolan Principles’) which are:

**Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

**Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Milton Keynes Council’s Arrangements for Dealing with Standards Allegations provide that the Monitoring Officer may adjudicate on many of the complaints received by her. However, where a complaint is sufficiently serious, she may refer the matter to a
Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee, known as the Assessment
Sub-Committee, to decide how the matter should proceed.

The Sub-Committee may, for example, decide that there should be an investigation of the facts behind an allegation, and the matter may proceed to a hearing before the Standards Committee Hearing Sub-Committee.

Where a complaint reaches the Hearing Sub-Committee, it will hear evidence from the Complainant, the Subject Member, the Investigator and the Independent Person before deciding whether the Code has been breached and what sanctions, if any, to recommend.

Under its arrangements, Milton Keynes Council is required to ensure that a member of a Town or Parish Council should attend an Assessment or Hearing Sub-Committee to advise whenever the Sub-Committee is considering an allegation against a Town or Parish Councillor. The Council recruits between two and four such Councillors, whose appointment lasts for four years.

**CO-OPTED PARISH MEMBER**

**SELECTION CRITERIA - SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES**

Co-opted parish members will:

* be a current member of a Parish / Town / Community Council in the City of Milton Keynes; and
* have a keen interest in standards in public life.

Co-opted parish members will:

* be a person in whose integrity the public can have confidence;
* understand and comply with confidentiality requirements;
* have a demonstrable interest in local issues;
* have an awareness of the importance of ethical behaviours; and
* be a good communicator.

Desirable additional criteria are:

* working knowledge / experience of the standards regime; and
* knowledge and understanding of judicial / quasi-judicial or complaints processes.

You should demonstrate in your application how you meet the above criteria as this will assist the short-listing process.

Means of assessment will be by application form and by interview.

**Note**

You will be required to attend ordinary Standards Committee meetings (approximately four per year) which take place in the evening.

You may be invited to attend Sub-Committee meetings which may take place in the day, or the evening.

**ROLE OF CO-OPTED PARISH MEMBER**

**ROLE DESCRIPTION**

Responsible to: Milton Keynes City Council

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, members of the Standards Committee, officers and members of the Authority and Town and Parish Councillors within the Authority’s area and key stakeholders within the community.

1. To assist the Authority in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted members and in particular to uphold the Code of Conduct and the seven Principles of Public Life, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.

2. To be consulted by the Authority through the Standards Committee both on matters of policy and specific Conduct matters involving Town or Parish Council members.

3. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework operated across the relevant authorities .

4. To attend training events organised and promoted by the Milton Keynes City Council Standards Committee.

5. To act as advocate and ambassador for ethical behaviour.

**CO-OPTED PARISH MEMBER FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| **CRITERIA**  | **Essential / Desirable** |
| **Skills and Abilities**  |
| Ability to contribute to a meeting actively and effectively.  | **E** |
| Ability to remain calm under pressure.  | **E** |
| Inclusive and empathetic approach to making enquiries. | **E** |
| **Experience**  |
| Experience of hearing and adjudicating complaints in a judicial or quasi-judicial capacity. | **D** |
| Experience of working closely with local government officers or councillors.  | **E** |
| **Knowledge**  |
| Ability to obtain or hold a sound knowledge of the administrative framework of local government.  | **D** |
| Sound knowledge of the role of councillors and officers within a local authority.  | **E** |
| **Other Requirements**  |
| Demonstrate a desire to serve the local community and uphold democracy.  | **E** |
| Ability to demonstrate personal integrity.  | **E** |
| A current councillor of a Parish / Town / Community Council in the Milton Keynes Borough.  | **E** |

*You should demonstrate in your application how you meet the above criteria as this will assist the shortlisting process.*

*Means of assessment will be by assessment of application form and interview.*