

## **WORK PROGRAMME FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Role and Functions of the Standards Committee derive from primary and secondary legislation and the Council's Constitution. The Work Programme for the Standards committee must therefore link to these roles and functions.

### **Statutory Authority**

The Council is required to operate a Standards Committee pursuant to s53 of the Local Government Act 2000. These requirements are expanded within the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008. The legislation sets out the general functions of a Standards Committee as being:

- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the members and co-opted members of the authority, and
- (b) assisting members and co-opted members of the authority to observe the authority's code of conduct.
- (c) advising the authority on the adoption or revision of a code of conduct,
- (d) monitoring the operation of the authority's code of conduct, and
- (e) advising, training or arranging to train members and co-opted members of the authority on matters relating to the authority's code of conduct.

The Act states that the Council may arrange for their standards committee to exercise such other functions as it considers appropriate.

### **Council's Constitution**

The Council's Constitution outlines the roles and functions of the Standards committee. These roles and functions are;

- a) Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted Members;
- b) Assisting the Councillors and co-opted Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct, as contained within Part 5 of this Constitution;
- c) Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code of Conduct for Councillors;
- d) Monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct for Councillors;
- e) Advising, training or arranging to train Councillors and co-opted Members on matters relating to the Code of Conduct for Councillors;

- f) Granting dispensations to Councillors and co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Code of Conduct for Councillors;
- g) Dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter which is referred by an Ethical Standards Officer to the Monitoring Officer;
- h) The exercise of paragraphs (a) to (g) above in relation to the Parish Councils wholly within the District of North Hertfordshire and the members of those Parish Councils;
- i) To determine local initial assessments into allegations of misconduct by local district and parish councillors etc., by way of a system of Assessment, Review and Hearing Sub-Committees.
- k) To provide advice and guidance to Councillors and co-opted Members and to make arrangements for training on any matter within these Terms of Reference.
- l) To deal with applications for exemption from political restriction or to consider whether to include a post within the list of politically restricted posts.

#### Additional Roles of the Standards Committee

- a) Submission of recommendations to the Council on Codes and protocols;
- b) Oversight of the Register of Members' Interests;
- c) Overview of the Whistle Blowing Policy;
- d) Overview of complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations.

The Monitoring Officer is required to contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct through the provision of support to the Standards Committee.

This work programme for the Standards Committee comprises:

- Table of regular agenda items which will be brought to the Committee annually
- Table of ongoing work subject to review at each Committee meeting

**CALENDAR OF ITEMS FOR THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE INCLUDING:**

- [Forward planning: Matters for consideration at Standards Committee 2009-2010](#)
- **Annual Calendar of regular items for the Standards Committee**

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Work Action</b>	<b>Updated Position</b>
Ongoing throughout the year	<p>Ongoing updating to Council as necessary / liaison between Members and the Chair of Standards Committee</p> <p>Training for: Standards Committee Members District Council Members Parish and Town Councils</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Joint training for Standards Committee members was offered on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009 with Broxbourne Borough–Council. A number of members attended.</p> <p>The Chair and Vice chair of the Committee attended the Standards Board Annual Conference, October 2009</p> <p>Training on Standards Hearings was offered by Hertsmere Borough Council on 4 November 2009. Two members attended.</p> <p>Committee Members were shown, and discussed a Standards Board DVD, ‘<i>Assessments made clear</i>’ 10th November 2009</p> <p>Members agreed at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009 for more joint training with Broxbourne for early 2010. Members are asked to refer to paragraph 4.3.3 of the Report</p>

	<p>Meetings with Parish/Town Councils in the future to consider the introduction of local complaints processes to curtail the number of Code of Conduct complaints</p> <p>Code of Conduct Complaint Handling (Assessment Sub Committee, Review Sub Committee etc)</p> <p>Reporting of new draft Code when available</p>	<p>There has been no general governance training arranged for District and Parish Council members, ( other than Standards Committee members) during 2009/10. This will be carried forward to be undertaken following the Elections and as part of the induction process for any new members,</p> <p>The volume of complaints made under the code of conduct has significantly decreased. The Standards Committee has requested that this area of work be de-prioritised.</p> <p>This is ongoing</p> <p>Pending publication of the new Code. Please refer to para 4.2.5 of the Report</p>
<p>July – September 2009</p>	<p>New Declarations of Office and Registers of Interest to be received within 28 days</p> <p>Recruitment to vacant parish seat on Standards Committee</p> <p>Draft selection protocol on recruitment of parish members to be approved by Standards Committee and referred to Council</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring continues</p> <p>Report to Standards Committee November 2009. To full Council April 2010. Recruitment will then be progressed</p> <p>Report to Standards Committee on 10 November 2009. To full Council April 2010</p>

	<p>MO to work with Audit Manager to produce protocols for processing of confidential reports under Confidential Reporting Policy</p> <p>Standards Board training DVD to be shown prior to or after full Council meeting.</p>	<p>This has not been completed in the timeframe suggested due to other workload. This will be commenced prior to 31 March 2010</p> <p>It had previously been considered to show this after full Council. The Standards Committee considered alternative approaches at their meeting on 10 November 2009.</p>
July – September annually	Review of Confidential Reporting code	This was reviewed by the previous Monitoring Officer
	Review of Gifts and Hospitality policy and register for members	<p>This has been reviewed and it is anticipated that an amended policy will be considered as part of the Constitution Review. However there is also a need to consider the Officers Policy in relation to this area to ensure some consistency.</p> <p>The Acting Monitoring Officer had previously indicated that when this was ready it would be put before Standards committee for approval prior to adoption by full Council. However the Acting Monitoring Officer has since had referred to the Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee and this item is not directly within the Terms of Reference for Standards Committee.</p>
	Review of Register of Interests and training for members	The review of the Register of Interests is currently outstanding. It has been delayed due to other workload
October – December 2009	<p>Revise and approve the Member / Officer protocol and refer to Council to amend the Constitution</p> <p>Advice/Guidance on publication of members interests and other registers on the Council's website</p>	<p>Work has commenced on this and it will be included as part of the Constitution Review. A Report is presented at this meeting of the committee 23.2.10.</p> <p>A Report is presented at this meeting of the committee 23.2.10.</p>

October – December annually	Review of Conflicts of Interest policy	
January – March 2010	Revise and approve Members Induction Pack	Work has commenced by the Democratic Services Manager and Learning and Development. The Monitoring Officer will in put regarding the Code of Conduct and Governance Training.
January – March annually	Recruitment of parish and independent members (tri-annually, and when any vacancies rise)  Review of list of politically restricted posts	This will be reviewed once the Protocol on the Appointment of Parish and Town Councillors has been put before full Council during April 2010.  Members are referred to paragraph 44.7 of the Report
April – June annually	Review of Code of Conduct complaints	
	Indemnity confirmation for independent members	
	Annual report to full Council on the work of the Standards Committee	
	Quarterly and Annual Returns to Standards Board to be completed and reported to Standards Committee  Review local authorities who have been acknowledged by Standards Board to consider whether any methods used by them can be considered by NHDC	All returns completed on time  The intention remains to undertake this work along the timescales identified, however it will be kept under review because it may be necessary to de-prioritise it depending on other workload.

