

## **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 has previously comprised:

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

This has been simplified in this version, due in part to the nature of the work being undertaken.

**CALENDAR OF ITEMS FOR THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (FEBRUARY 2011)**

<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>Involvement of Parish/Town Councils</p> <p>Code of Conduct Complaint Handling (Assessment Sub Committee, Review Sub Committee etc)</p> <p>Review of the Localism Bill and impact on the Standards regime.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Joint Code of Conduct training for Standards Committee members, Parish Council Members and District Council members was offered on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010. A number of members attended. Training in relation to the Code of Conduct will be revisited following the Elections.</p> <p>Parish Council clerks/chairs have been invited to the meeting of the Standards Committee in accordance with the Minutes of the previous committee meeting on 29 June 2010.</p> <p>Ongoing, Update under Appendix 2 (Part 2)</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
October – December 2010	<p>Review of Conflicts of Interest policy</p> <p>Advice/Guidance on publication of</p>	<p>A review of this Policy has been undertaken in conjunction with Internal Audit. The Policy has been considered by Audit and Risk Committee on the same date as the meeting of the Standards Committee. The Policy relates to staff only and so is not within the terms of reference for the Standards Committee. However progress is reported to the Standards Committee for information.</p> <p>A Report was taken to Council by the Monitoring Officer on 14 December</p>

	<p>members interests and other registers on the Council's website</p>	<p>2010. The Council resolved as follows:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) That it be advertised on the Council's Website that the Register of Members' Interests and Register of Gifts and Hospitality are available for inspection and that an electronic version of individual Members' register entries could be provided on request; and</p> <p>(2) That the current system of non-publication be maintained, but that the registers be made available for inspection should this be requested.</p> <p>REASON FOR DECISION: To respond to a request from the Standards Committee that this matter be considered by Full Council.</p>
<p>March- June 2011</p>	<p>New Declarations of Office and Registers of Interest to be received within 28 days</p> <p>Confidential Reporting Policy</p> <p>MO to work with Audit Manager to produce protocols for processing of confidential reports under Confidential Reporting Policy</p> <p>Annual report to full Council on the work of the Standards Committee</p>	<p>Monitoring will follow the elections in May 2011.</p> <p>The Confidential Reporting Code is an Agenda Item at the Standards Committee Meeting and will be referred to Cabinet.</p> <p>In light of the progress with the Confidential Reporting Code (item above), work on the protocols will now follow in due course.</p> <p>Chair of Standards Committee to present</p>
<p>July – September 2011</p>	<p>Review of Gifts and Hospitality policy and register for members</p>	<p>The review of this policy remains outstanding. There is also a need to consider the Officers Policy in relation to this area to ensure consistency. The Monitoring Officer has previously confirmed that this item is not directly within the Terms of Reference for Standards Committee so will not come to the Standards Committee for consideration. However the Committee can be kept updated on progress.</p>

