

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 8 MARCH 2010 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.20 PM**

Present:-

Wokingham Borough Member:- *Malcolm Storry*

Independent Members:- *David Comben (Chairman) and Eric Davies*

Parish/Town Council representative:- *Mr J Heggadon, Roy Mantel and Ray Duncan*

*Also present:- Kevin Jacob, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Colin Lawley, Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer*

PART I

40. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 December 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from UllaKarin Clark, John Giles, Anita Grosz and Pauline Helliar-Symons.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

43. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

44. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

45. USE OF MONITORING OFFICER INTERVENTION

The Committee considered the possible use by Monitoring Officers of informal intervention into matters of dispute which might otherwise become formal Code of Conduct complaints. The possible use of intervention had been suggested by Standards for England as part of their training DVD 'Assessment Made Clear' which suggested best practice in the operation of the local assessment Councillor Code of Conduct framework.

Colin Lawley commented that in his view was that there was a place for informal intervention, but its use had to be considered very carefully as there were significant risks involved. A Monitoring Officer could only defuse a potential complaint in this way if all parties agreed and were willing to co-operate. The suggestion of intervention had to be handled very carefully and sensitively so that the potential complainant did not feel unduly influenced not to proceed with a formal complaint.

The Committee was informed that the Wokingham Borough Council Monitoring Officer Susanne Nelson-Wehrmeyer had intervened in one matter and successfully resolved a situation that had the potential to develop into a formal complaint. It was noted that a Monitoring Officer could only intervene if they were aware of an issue prior to the

submission of a complaint. Once a complaint was formally made it had to be considered by the Standards Committee.

Colin Lawley commented that in future the Committee could be informed of any use interventions by the Monitoring Officer that resolved potential complaints as part of the regular complaints feedback.

David Comben set out the circumstance where it might be useful for a Monitoring Officer to clarify matters with a potential complainant where the details of a matter were unclear.

The principle of intervention were appropriate was supported, but a number of members of the Committee felt that care had to be taken to avoid any perception of matters that should follow the complaints procedure being 'covered up'.

46. INTERNAL REVIEW OF ETHICAL GOVERNANCE 2009/2010

The Committee considered a report, (Agenda pages 7 to 12) which set out a summary of an internal audit review of the Council's ethical governance arrangements conducted in 2009. The summary had been brought to the Committee's attention as part of its role to monitor the operation of the Member and Officer Codes of Conduct and applied to the Borough Council and its Councillors only.

Kevin Jacob clarified that the use of SLB within the report and attached action plan referred to Council's Strategic Leadership Board. The Strategic Leadership Board was the senior Officer group within the authority comprised of General Managers and chaired by the Council's Chief Executive. Colin Lawley commented that the Board did not have any decision making powers, but individual General Managers had powers delegated to them as set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Areas highlighted to the Committee included actions to be taken to improve training for Councillors and training records, annual reminders to Councillors that they should regularly review and update their declarations of interests and procedures to be followed by Officers with regard to the offer and acceptance of gifts and hospitality.

Various members of the Committee referred to the management response set out in No 2.1 of the audit Action Plan which indicated that Councillor's Declaration of Interest Forms would in future be available for inspection via the Council's website, in addition to hard copy in the interests in accessibility and transparency. It was stressed that placing the forms online would be voluntary and therefore any councillor who was concerned that there details might be misused could decide not to give permission.

In response to a question, Colin Lawley commented that advice from Standards for England remained that membership of the Grand Charity or Masons had to be declared on Declaration of Interest Forms in the same way as membership of any other voluntary body or charity.

A number of members of the Committee expressed concern that the recommendation set out in No 3.2 of the Action Plan, that a clarification should be sent to all Officers of the need to record any gifts offered, but not accepted had not been accepted by management. It was felt that if this was implemented it would identify the source of potential attempts to influence Officers.

Colin Lawley commented that this had not been accepted on the basis that no such requirement existed within the Councillor Code of Conduct, which would have led to a lack of conformity of the requirements for Officers and Councillors. Roy Mantel commented that in his view it would be very difficult to define what could be regarded as an 'offer'.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

47. REPORT OF THE MEETING BETWEEN THE CHAIRMAN, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP AND LEADER OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP

David Comben reported back on his meeting with Councillor Rob Stanton, Deputy Leader of the Council and Councillor Prue Bray, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group that had taken place in February.

He commented that he had found them to be broadly sympathetic to the role and operation of the Standards Committee within the Borough. A point that he had emphasised to them was that a key part of the role of the Committee was to assist Councillors to achieve high standards of ethical governance and that the Committee did not go about its role by seeking to highlight mistakes or catch individual Councillors out. However, it did have a statutory role and duty to respond to complaints against Councillors if they were received.

A number of issues were raised by Rob Stanton and Prue Bray as areas that might be covered in future training/guidance:

- Serving as a school governor and the declaration of interests
- Clarification of the statutory roles of the Monitoring Officer, Chief Executive and Chief Finance, (Section 151) Officer as there was some uncertainty as to the most appropriate Officer to contact in the event of a concern relating to ethical governance
- The role of Neighbourhood Action Groups and the application of the ethical governance framework.

David Comben informed the Committee that he had also attended a meeting of Middle Manager Forum which was an Officer grouping within the Council. The objective of attending this meeting had been to raise awareness of less senior managers of the ethical governance and Code of Conduct regime.

A number of Members commented that continued active involvement by Wokingham Borough Councillors in the Standards Committee was very important. David Comben commented that his view was that Wokingham Borough Councillors did now play an active part in the Committee's work, particularly the administration of the local assessment framework.

It was felt by the Committee that attendance by Wokingham Borough Councillors at Code of Conduct training needed to be improved and also made more accessible to town and parish councillors. It was suggested by the Chairman that he should write to Councillors to strongly encourage them to attend such events.

Malcolm Storry commented that given the demands on Councillors' time it was important to offer training on several different dates so as to make it as accessible as possible.

Colin Lawley commented that following the local elections it was expected that Code of Conduct training would be offered over three to four occasions and that this issues raised by the Deputy Leader and Leader of the Liberal Group could be incorporated within this.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

48. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMME 2009

The Committee considered a report, (Agenda pages 13 to 15) which set out actions taken to establish and develop a formal Councillor Development and Training Programme and some of training offered to Wokingham Borough Council elected members during the 2009/2010 municipal year.

Kevin Jacob commented that the objective in bring the report to the Committee was so that the Committee could be satisfied that appropriate training was being offered to Borough Councillors. If Councillors were better trained in how to undertake and understand the different aspects of their role, there was less risk of breakdowns in ethical governance.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) The introduction of a Member Development and Training Programme be noted;
- 2) The training offered to Borough Councillors to date in 2009/2010 be noted.

49. STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND ANNUAL RETURN 2010

The Committee considered a report and appendix, (Agenda pages 16 to 31) which set out the requirement from Standards for England that each principal authority complete an on-line return of the activities of their Standards Committees during the previous financial year.

Kevin Jacob informed the Committee that it was recommended by Standards for England that Standards Committee be consulted upon the questions set out in the return. It was suggested that Officers should complete a draft response prior to consulting members of the Committee who wished to be involved. He commented that he felt it had to be recognised that a number of the questions posed were challenging and would potentially indentify areas where there was a tension between what Standards for England regarded as best practice and was considered to reasonable given local resources.

With regard to Part 5 of the return which addressed the relationship between principal authorities and parish/town councils within their areas, John Heggadon commented that the Berkshire Association of Local Councils provided advice to parish/town councillors within Berkshire and that a similar group existed for parish/town clerks.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The questions set out within the Annual Return be noted;
- 2) Officers be delegated to complete the return in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee, a parish/town representative and elected member representative from each political group.

50. STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND – BULLETIN 46

The Committee considered the latest Standards for England Bulletin, (Agenda pages 34 to 45)

David Comben referred to the article concerning Bias, Predetermination and the Code on pages 34-35 and commented that the article set out recent developments in case law which indicated that a two stage test should be applied to questions of predetermination and bias. In his view a key factor to consider was what the fair minded observer would think of given set out circumstances. Considering complaints from this position was a common thread running through the entire Code of Conduct framework. Malcolm Storry commented that a problem with such a test was that it was a matter of subjective judgment.

Kevin Jacob commented that it was not expected that elected councillors as representative of their local community, elected on a platform of policies and beliefs, should not have opinions on a given subject. Rather it became a question of predetermination and bias if they were not prepared to actively consider alternative arguments or were could be demonstrated to have closed their minds.

A number of members of the Committee referred to the update within the Bulletin to the transfer of functions of the Adjudication Panel for England into the unified Tribunals Structure. John Heggadon commented he had felt that the Adjudication Panel had not always fully understood the complexities and characteristics of parish/town councils and that he hoped that this would improve under the revised structure.

51. UPDATE ON RECEIPT BY THE MONITORING OFFICER OF DECLARATION OF INTEREST FORMS

Kevin Jacob reported that the Borough Council held 100% of Wokingham Borough Council Declaration of Interest Forms on file and approximately 87% of Declarations of Interest relating to parish/town councillors.

The Committee was reminded that the Borough Council requested that parish/town council clerks supply a copy of their records of Declarations of Interests on the grounds that this made them more accessible to the public. However, there was no requirement for them to supply them in law or guidance. The only requirement was that Declarations of Interest be available from the offices of the town/parish council and a number of parish/town councils within the area had decided not to supply copies as a matter of course.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee

If you need help in understanding this document or if you would like a copy of it in large print please contact one of our Team Support Officers.

Governance Champions

A Governance Champion is expected to;

- Champion democratic and governance issues within the Council
- Assist the promotion of high standards of behaviour and conduct throughout the Council
- Have knowledge of how decisions are made and cascade this throughout their respective service areas
- Have an understanding of the role of Elected Members
- Have an understanding of corporate governance issues affecting the Council
- Have an understanding of the Constitution of the Council
- Have an understanding of the role of the Monitoring Officer
- Champion the role of the Standards Committee
- Have an understanding and insight into other policies and practices relating to governance and democracy

A Governance Champion can expect to:

- Be offered the opportunity to attend training events relevant to governance and democracy
- Be consulted by officers on the development of policies and strategies concerning governance and democracy.
- Be invited to participate, where appropriate, in meetings and working groups concerning their subject area.

TITLE Update on Complaints and Feedback

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Standards Committee on 8 June 2010

WARD None Specific

GENERAL MANAGER Susanne Nelson-Wehrmeyer, Head of Governance and Democratic Services

LEAD MEMBER UllaKarin Clark, Executive Member for Corporate Services

OUTCOME

To inform and feedback results of the Initial Consideration Sub Committee and Standards for England.

RECOMMENDATION

To note the report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

There has been one new complaint considered by the Initial Consideration Sub-Committee since the last feedback report on 2 December 2009.

The Standards Board for England has published the results of an investigation into a complaint.

Background

Initial Consideration Sub-Committee meeting on 21/4/10 Reference CMPL03090

No further action to be taken

Standards for England Investigation

Finding of no breach.

Analysis of Issues

There will be a verbal report.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

If the Committee decides to discuss the specifics of individual cases it may be necessary to consider excluding the public if that would involve the disclosure of exempt information.

List of Background Papers

Initial Consideration Sub Committee decisions Standards for England Investigation Summary.

Contact Colin Lawley	Service Governance and Democratic
Telephone No 0118 974 6524	Email susanne.nelson-wehrmeyer@wokingham.gov.uk
Date Tuesday, 25 May 2010	Version No. 1

TITLE	Appointment of delegates to attend the 9th Annual Standards Board for England Assembly 18-19 October 2010
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Standards Committee on 8 June 2010
WARD	None
LEAD OFFICER	Susanne Nelson-Wehrmeyer, Head of Governance and Democratic Services.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

For the Committee to decide who to appoint to represent the Committee at the 9th Annual Standards Board for England Conference to held on 18-19 October 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That Geoff Wilde and one other member of the Committee be appointed to attend the Assembly;
- 2) That it be noted that Anne Hunter, Democratic Services Manager will attend the Assembly.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION**Background**

The 9th Standards for England Annual Assembly will take place on 18-19 October 2010 at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham.

The Conference is aimed at monitoring officers, standards committee members and key figures on local government. The theme for this year's assembly is 'A place for Standards'. An advance programme is attached to this report.

Provisional places have been booked for Geoff Wilde on the basis that he is a new Independent Member of the Committee and Anne Hunter on the basis that she will be providing support to the Committee in the future.

Analysis of Issues

Attendance at the conference helps provides both Standards Committee members and Officers with the knowledge and skills needed to undertake their role. It also provides an opportunity for debate and the sharing of best practice amongst colleagues from across the England.

Corporate Implications

Attendance at the conference helps contribute towards the role of the Committee in promoting high standards of conduct and represents a key training opportunity.

There is sufficient budget to send a maximum of 3 delegates at a cost including accommodation of approx £530 per head.

Reasons for Decision
To make a decision on who should attend the Assembly.

Alternative Options considered, if any
To decide not to send as many or not send any delegates to the Assembly.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
None

List of Background Papers
Standards Board for England Assembly Advanced Programme.

Contact Kevin Jacob	Service Governance and Democratic Services
Telephone No 0118 974 6058	Email kevin.jacob@wokingham.gov.uk
Date Thursday, 27 May 2010	Version No. 1.00

A place for standards

2010 Annual Assembly of Standards Committees

Advance programme

Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 October 2010
International Convention Centre, Birmingham



Welcome to a place for standards

The Annual Assembly is the place to be if you want to build your knowledge of the Code of Conduct and the local standards framework.

We've developed this year's programme in partnership with monitoring officers and standards committee members from a range of authorities. It includes breakout sessions for all levels of experience, from the experienced independent chair who wants to boost member engagement and build the reputation of the standards committee, to sessions designed to help those new to the standards framework to build their confidence in managing local assessment, investigations, hearings and determinations

Delegates will have many opportunities to share notable practice, discuss how to promote high standards and local democracy and to get support and advice on managing a proportionate, cost effective local standards framework.

Further information on session content and speakers will be added to the Standards for England web pages regularly over the next few months, so please keep visiting www.standardsforengland.gov.uk for the latest news.

Choosing your breakout sessions

This year there are 20 breakout sessions to choose from. There are also two main plenary sessions which all delegates are encouraged to attend.

Descriptions of all the sessions are provided on pages 4 to 15, where you'll find further information on their content, format and who they are recommended for.

Places in breakout sessions are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis, so please complete and return your session preference form as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. You can also select and submit your session preferences online via our website.

It's helpful to co-ordinate your breakout session choices with colleagues who are also attending, to ensure your authority gets the benefit of as wide a range of information and training as possible.

Guide to session formats



Hall 1 plenary sessions: Attended by all delegates and take place in Hall 1. There are two plenaries in this year's conference programme. They include presentations from expert speakers and an opportunity for delegates to ask questions.



Theatre-style sessions: Presentations and information from expert speakers and an opportunity for audience discussion and questions and answers. Use theatre-style seating.



Workshops: Take a practical approach, for example by working through case examples or group exercises. Delegates sit at round tables in groups of 8-10.



Fringe events: Optional early-evening sessions run by a range of organisations from the local government family. Further information on fringe events at this year's Assembly will be added to our website, www.standardsforengland.gov.uk.



Drop in sessions: Short 1-2-1 sessions, held in the early morning and at lunchtime, where delegates can talk to a Standards for England team member about a specific Code or local standards framework query. Session slots can be booked in advance via our website. Any slots which are not booked in advance will be available to book on the day at the Delegate Information Desk.

Induction loop information

An induction loop system, which can be linked to visitor's hearing aids, is operated in selected halls at the ICC. If you require an induction loop you can collect it from the Delegate Information Desk in the registration area. A user guide will be also be provided.

If you would like a copy of this advance programme in another format or language, please contact Standards for England by emailing annualassembly2010@standardsforengland.gov.uk or call 01483 205432

Day 1 Monday 18 October 2010

08.30-10.30 Registration and breakfast.

09.30-10.15



1-2-1 Drop-in sessions

An opportunity to talk to a Standards for England team member about a specific Code or local standards framework query. Session slots can be booked in advance via our website from April 2010. Any slots which are not booked in advance will be available to book on the day at the Delegate Information Desk.

09.30-10.15



Welcome session: Getting up to speed

Aimed at: Ideal for anyone who is new to the Code or the Annual Assembly.
An introductory session designed to bring you up to speed with the role and responsibilities of Standards for England and other organisations in the standards community. The session will also provide a quick overview of latest developments to the Code of Conduct and the local standards framework, and give delegates a chance to meet over coffee.

10.30-11.15



Opening address: A place for standards

Aimed at: All delegates.

A briefing on the national picture, providing the latest statistics and trends from quarterly monitoring and annual returns, plus a review of the challenges and priorities for the year ahead.

11.15-11.30 Move to next session

11.30-12.45



Local standards, local decisions, local differences

Aimed at: All delegates.

This session looks at the challenges of managing and making decisions during local assessment, investigations and hearings. It's your chance to talk in-depth about consistency, clarity and cost effectiveness. These are just some of the questions we hope the session will open up for debate:

- How do you sort out what is significant from a wealth of information and how do you know you have got the right information in the first place?
- What makes a proportionate and cost-effective investigation?
- How can we reflect local circumstances while having regard to national precedents? Do local differences really have an impact on the standards committee's decisions, and is this something we should be concerned about?
- What do we need to take into account to help us to make the 'right' decision?

12.45-13.00 **Move to lunch**

13.00-14.00 **Lunch**

13.00-14.00 **1-2-1 Drop-in sessions**



An opportunity to talk to a Standards for England team member about a specific Code or local standards framework query. Session slots can be booked in advance via our website from April 2010. Any slots which are not booked in advance will be available to book on the day at the Delegate Information desk.

14.00-14.15 **Move to next session**

14.15-15.30 **Breakout sessions**

Please choose one of the following sessions. All sessions last for 1 hour 15 minutes.



Principles of public life and the Code of Conduct

Aimed at: A discussion aimed at all delegates.

Selflessness... Integrity... Objectivity... Accountability... Openness... Honesty... Leadership

Do you think the Code of Conduct captures the spirit of the seven general principles of public life?

This session explores the link between the principles and the local standards framework. It gives you the chance to debate whether the principles are right for today – are they a powerful tool that can help us to increase public trust in local government – or are they just words? How can we use the principles to help uphold and promote high standards amongst elected members? Do you think there is a good fit between the principles and the Code of Conduct? Do standards committees really reflect the principles in their management of the framework and in their responses to complaints about member behaviour?



Working with town and parish councils

Aimed at: Suitable for town and parish council representatives and anyone who works with town and parish councils.

An opportunity to discuss some of the specific standards challenges town and parish councils can face, such as breakdown in relations between different groups, poor understanding of procedures, major disputes over local 'hot topics' and registering and declaring interests. The session will look at how standards committees, town and parish representatives and monitoring officers can work with town and parish councils to help resolve these challenges.

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Getting to grips with predetermination and bias

Aimed at: A 'technical' workshop suitable for officers, but may also be useful for some standards committee members.

This workshop will provide practical advice on how to understand, manage and advise on the complex issues of bias and predetermination.



Independent chairs: Skills, knowledge and development

Aimed at: For new or aspiring independent chairs of standards committees or those involved in the development and training of independent chairs.

This session gets to grips with the role of the independent chair, explaining the responsibilities and the challenges of the job and providing practical guidance on the key skills and experience you need in order to do it well.



First steps for standards committees: Building the right foundations

Aimed at: Mainly suitable for standards committee members, but would be also be useful for officers who want to improve their authority's understanding of the Code and the local standards framework.

This session starts with a look at the foundations for effective management of the local standards committee. It explains what you need to do to ensure your committee complies with requirements such as being properly constituted and making decisions within appropriate timeframes.

Once these foundations are in place, standards committees can help to ensure that councillors and the wider authority are aware of the practical implications of the local standards framework and the Code of Conduct. The session looks at some of the ways standards committees can raise awareness and ensure councillors have the right training and guidance on the Code and the framework.



Local standards live

Aimed at: All delegates.

96% of delegates who attended this session in 2009 thought it was excellent – so here it is again, with a brand new range of Code scenarios.

Watch a series of performances and spot the potential Code breaches. You'll get to question and advise the actors, drawing on your own experiences to challenge situations and raise issues. You'll pick up tips from colleagues on different ways of dealing with the scenario, and discuss good practice ideas and the pros and cons of your preferred approach.



Local assessment: Building confidence

Aimed at: Less experienced officers and/or new standards committee members.

A practical guide to managing proportionate, transparent and cost effective local assessment of complaints, designed to help you to build your confidence and knowledge. Scenarios and case examples are used to explain the process, including filtering complaints, convening sub-assessment committees, and how and when to make assessment decisions public.



Managing challenging behaviour

Aimed at: All delegates.

We are often asked for advice on how to deal with 'difficult' members, such as those who will not take on board the monitoring officer's advice, engage with the standards committee or pay heed to the Code of Conduct. The session looks at how this kind of behaviour can impact on the standards committee, officers and on the reputation of the authority, and provides advice on the skills and techniques you can use to cope with it and make positive changes.



Discussion forum: Officers

Aimed at: Officers.

An opportunity to share experiences, challenges and solutions with colleagues, and to ask Standards for England your questions on the framework and the Code.

15.30-16.00

Refreshments and move to next session

16.00-17.15

Breakout sessions

Please choose 1 of the following sessions. All sessions last for 1 hour 15 minutes.



Appeal decisions: Discussion with the First Tier Tribunal

Aimed at: All delegates.

Get an update on tribunal processes, followed by an opportunity to discuss the lessons learnt from the past 12 months of hearings and appeals. What issues and challenges frequently come up? Where and why do interpretations between local standards committees and the Tribunal differ?



Prevention better than cure?

Aimed at: Officers.

Is it a good idea to informally 'intervene' to resolve potential Code breaches, before the more costly formal elements of the framework are initiated? This session hears examples of how liaising informally with political group leaders and providing advice to individual members can work in practice, and considers key questions such as when is informal intervention appropriate, what are the benefits and are there any dangers to look out for?



Successful investigations

Aimed at: New or less experienced officers or those who want to improve their management of investigations.

A practical session working through each stage of a local investigation to build your knowledge of the process and improve your investigations management. The session will also provide advice on how to successfully manage tricky issues such historical complaints, those involving longstanding political disputes, bullying and how and when to link police or audit investigations to Code investigations.



Next steps for standards committees: Building a wider work programme

Aimed at: Standards committee members.

Many standards committees are ready for the next step on from simply fulfilling their statutory obligations. They are looking for ways to proactively promote ethical standards and integrate them into the culture and governance of their authority. Against this backdrop, this session gives you the opportunity to share ideas about how you can use your expertise and influence more widely and build a wider programme of work for your standards committee. The session will also consider the implications of doing this, such as how to balance this wider way of working with maintaining independence, and how to evaluate the impact of your work – how will you know when you've made a difference?



Local determinations: Building confidence

Aimed at: new or less experienced delegates.

A practical guide to managing local determinations. This session is designed to help you to build your confidence and knowledge of the local determinations process. Scenarios and practical examples are used to explain key stages of the process, including consideration meetings, hearings, sanctions, and how and when to make the findings public.



Social networking, the internet and the Code: Advising councillors

Aimed at: Suitable for all delegates, with particular interest for officers who may need to advise members on this issue.

Do you know your 'Tweety Hall' from your 'Tweetminster'? Have you dipped your toe into the 'blogosphere'?

Many councillors already understand that when it comes to reaching the electorate quickly and cheaply, online methods are hard to beat. But it can be a tricky area. This workshop provides advice on how to guide councillors on getting the most out of social media – without falling foul of the Code. You can also take the opportunity to ask speakers how you can use social media to communicate the work of your standards committee.



Code refresher

Aimed at: New or less experienced delegates or those who would benefit from a refresher.

A chance for delegates to get guidance and answers to their frequently asked questions on the most frequent Code breaches. The session will focus on working through practical examples.

Visit the Standards Forum at www.standardsforengland.gov.uk to vote for the areas of the Code you think this session should cover.



Recruiting independent standards committee members

Aimed at: All delegates.

This workshop will give practical advice on how to successfully recruit and retain independent members for the standards committee.

The workshop will also look at how to develop job descriptions for independent members, how to promote opportunities to join the committee (for example through effective advertising, web content and recruitment packs), and the best ways to support and train your new members.



Discussion forum: Standards committees

Aimed at: Standards committee members.

An opportunity to share experiences, challenges and solutions with colleagues, and to ask Standards for England your questions on the framework and the Code.

17.30-18.30



Fringe events

Provided by a range of local government organisations. For further information, please visit www.standardsforengland.gov.uk.

19.45 – late

Drinks reception and conference dinner

Dress code: Smart casual

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Day 2 Tuesday 19 October 2010

09.00-10.00 Registration for 1 day delegates
Light refreshments available

09.00-10.00 **1-2-1 Drop-in sessions**



An opportunity to talk to a Standards for England team member about a specific Code or local standards framework query. Session slots can be booked in advance via our website from April 2010. Any slots which are not booked in advance will be available to book on the day at the Delegate Information Desk.

10.00-11.15 **Breakout sessions**

Please select one of the following sessions. All sessions last for one hour 15 minutes.



Principles of public life and the Code of Conduct

Aimed at: A discussion aimed at all delegates.

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Do you think the Code of Conduct captures the spirit of the seven general principles of public life?

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Developing your role: Fire, police, integrated transport and park authorities

Aimed at: Standards committee members and officers working with fire, police, integrated transport and park authorities.

This session looks at examples of how these authorities can expand their terms of reference and build their work programme. Delegates can get practical advice on working with the leadership of your authority on issues including member development, remuneration and performance.



Getting to grips with predetermination and bias

Aimed at: A 'technical' workshop suitable for officers, but may also be useful for standards committee members.

This workshop will provide practical advice on how to understand, manage and advise on the complex issues of bias and predetermination.



Independent chairs: Skills, knowledge and development

Aimed at: For new or aspiring independent chairs of standards committees or those involved in the development and training of independent chairs.

This session gets to grips with the role of the independent chair, explaining the responsibilities and the challenges of the job and providing practical guidance on the key skills and experience you need in order to do it well.



First steps for standards committees: Building the right foundations

Aimed at: Mainly suitable for standards committee members, but would also be useful for officers who want to improve their authority's understanding of the Code and the local standards framework.

This session starts with a look at the foundations for effective management of the local standards committee. It explains what you need to do to ensure your committee complies with requirements such as being properly constituted and making decisions within appropriate timeframes.

Once these foundations are in place, standards committees can help to ensure that councillors and the wider authority are aware of the practical implications of the local standards framework and the Code of Conduct. The session looks at some of the ways standards committees can raise awareness and ensure councillors have the right training and guidance on the Code and the framework.



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Local assessment: Building confidence

Aimed at: Less experienced officers and/or new standards committee members.

A practical guide to managing proportionate, transparent and cost effective local assessment of complaints, designed to help you to build your confidence and knowledge. Scenarios and case examples are used to explain the process, including filtering complaints, convening sub-assessment committees, and how and when to make assessment decisions public.



Managing challenging behaviour

Aimed at: All delegates.

We are often asked for advice on how to deal with 'difficult' members, such as those who will not take on board the monitoring officer's advice, engage with the standards committee or pay heed to the Code of Conduct. The session looks at how this kind of behaviour can impact on the standards committee, officers and on the reputation of the authority, and provides advice on the skills and techniques you can use to cope with it and make positive changes.



Discussion forum: Officers

Aimed at: Officers.

An opportunity to share experiences, challenges and solutions with colleagues, and to ask Standards for England your questions on the framework and the Code.

11.15-11.45 Refreshments and move to Hall 1 for next session

11.45-12.45 Plenary
Aimed at: All delegates.
Expert speakers on a topical issue to be confirmed.

12.45-13.00 Move to lunch

13.00-14.00 Lunch

13.00-14.00 1-2-1 Drop-in sessions
An opportunity to talk to a Standards for England team member about a specific Code or local standards framework query. Session slots can be booked in advance via our website from April 2010. Any slots which are not booked in advance will be available to book on the day at the Delegate Information desk.

14.00-14.15 Move to next session

14.15-15.30

Breakout sessions

Please choose one of the following sessions. All sessions last for 1 hour 15 minutes.



Appeal decisions: Discussion with the First Tier Tribunal

Aimed at: All delegates.

Get an update on tribunal processes, followed by an opportunity to discuss the lessons learnt from the past 12 months of hearings and appeals. What issues and challenges frequently come up? Where and why do interpretations between local standards committees and the Tribunal differ?



Prevention better than cure?

Aimed at: Officers.

Is it a good idea to informally 'intervene' to resolve potential Code breaches, before the more costly formal elements of the framework are initiated? This session hears examples of how liaising informally with political group leaders and providing advice to individual members can work in practice, and considers key questions such as when is informal intervention appropriate, what are the benefits and are there any dangers to look out for?



Successful investigations

Aimed at: New or less experienced officers or those who want to improve their management of investigations.

A practical session working through each stage of a local investigation to build your knowledge of the process and improve your investigations management. The session will also provide advice on how to successfully manage tricky issues such as historical complaints, those involving longstanding political disputes, bullying and how and when to link police or audit investigations to Code investigations.



Next steps for standards committees: Building a wider work programme

Aimed at: Standards committee members.

Many standards committees are ready for the next step on from simply fulfilling their statutory obligations. They are looking for ways to proactively promote ethical standards and integrate them into the culture and governance of their authority. Against this backdrop, this session gives you the opportunity to share ideas about how you can use your expertise and influence more widely and build a wider programme of work for your standards committee. The session will also consider the implications of doing this, such as how to balance this wider way of working with maintaining independence, and how to evaluate the impact of your work – how will you know when you've made a difference?

13



Local determinations: Building confidence

Aimed at: new or less experienced delegates.

A practical guide to managing local determinations. This session is designed to help you to build your confidence and knowledge of the local determinations process. Scenarios and practical examples are used to explain key stages of the process, including consideration meetings, hearings, sanctions, and how and when to make the findings public.



Social networking, the internet and the Code: Advising councillors

Aimed at: Suitable for all delegates, with particular interest for officers who may need to advise members on this issue.

Do you know your 'Tweety Hall' from your 'Tweetminster'? Have you dipped your toe into the 'blogosphere'?

Many councillors already understand that when it comes to reaching the electorate quickly and cheaply, online methods are hard to beat. But it can be a tricky area. This workshop provides advice on how to guide councillors on getting the most out of social media – without falling foul of the Code. You can also take the opportunity to ask speakers how you can use social media to communicate the work of your standards committee.



Code refresher

Aimed at: New or less experienced delegates or just those who'd benefit from a refresher.

A chance for delegates to get guidance and answers to their frequently asked questions on the most frequent Code breaches. The session will focus on working through practical examples.

Visit the Standards Forum at www.standardsforengland.gov.uk to vote for the areas of the Code you think this session should cover.



Recruiting independent standards committee members

Aimed at: All delegates.

This workshop will give practical advice on how to successfully recruit and retain independent members for the standards committee.

The workshop will also look at how to develop job descriptions for independent members, how to promote opportunities to join the committee (for example through effective advertising, web content and recruitment packs), and the best ways to support and train your new members.



Discussion forum: Standards committees

Aimed at: Standards committee members.

An opportunity to share experiences, challenges and solutions with colleagues, and to ask Standards for England your questions on the framework and the Code.

15.30-16.00 Refreshments

16.00 Close of conference

How to get there

The International Convention Centre is in the centre of Birmingham.

Train

Services to Birmingham New Street Station travel from locations all over the country. Services to Birmingham Snow Hill Station run in the local area. Please telephone National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48 49 50 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk for further information.

Taxi

The venue is a short taxi ride from Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill stations.

On foot

The venue is approximately 10 minutes walk from Birmingham New Street Station.

Car

Birmingham is easily accessible via a network of motorways. There are five public multi-storey car parks close to the ICC.

Further details on travelling to the ICC, including a map, locations of train stations, motorways and car parking will be provided in the Delegate Information Booklet, sent out to all delegates shortly before the Assembly.

Further information

If you have any enquiries regarding the conference, please contact:

Benedict Business Resources, St Jude's Place, PO Box 617, Albury, Guildford, Surrey, GU5 9XU

Tel: 01483 205 432

Fax: 01483 202 335

Email: annualassembly2010@standardsforengland.gov.uk

Or visit our website: www.standardsforengland.gov.uk

All information contained within this programme was correct at the time of publication, but may be subject to change.

Environmental information

We are committed to ensuring that the Assembly is as environmentally responsible as possible. All our event materials have been printed on FSC accredited paper using vegetable inks.



Printed on Nine Lives which is made from 100% recycled waste and fully FSC certified.

TITLE Standards for England – Bulletin 47

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Standards Committee on 8 March 2010

WARD None Specific

GENERAL MANAGER Susanne Nelson-Wehrmeyer, Head of Governance and Democratic Services

LEAD MEMBER Liz Siggery, Executive Member for Corporate Services

OUTCOME

To bring the latest Bulletin issued by Standards for England to the attention of the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the Bulletin. No decision is required, but the members of the Committee may wish to highlight and discuss matters of interest.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Standards for England, (formerly the Standards Board for England) produce regular bulletins on matters relating to ethical conduct and the operation of the Code of Conduct at national and local level. These can be accessed on line via the Standards for England website <http://www.standardsforengland.gov.uk/Publications/TheBulletin/>.

Background

As set out in the attached Bulletin.

Analysis of Issues

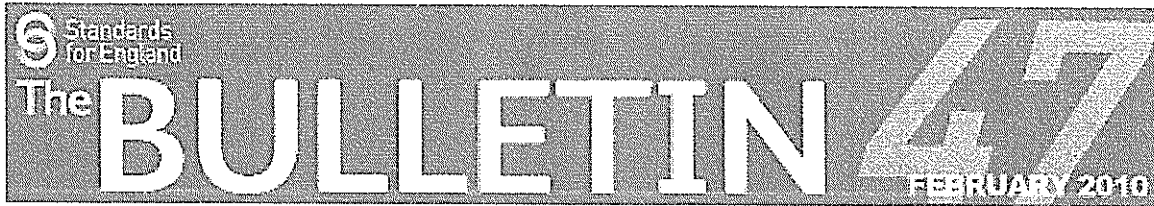
Key issues within the Bulletin include:

- Adjudication Panel for England becomes the First-Tier Tribunal
- Standards for England new risk based approach to monitoring
- Advice on the use of Social Networking
- Advice on the Appointment of Investigators

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
None

List of Background Papers
None

Contact Kevin Jacob, Principal Democratic Services Officer	Service Governance and Democratic Services
Telephone No 0118 974 6058	Email kevin.jacob@wokingham.gov.uk
Date Thursday, 27 May 2010	Version No. 1.00



2010 Annual Assembly of Standards Committees ‘A place for standards’

Following the success of last year’s fully booked Annual Assembly, we are well on the way to finalising the programme for this year’s event, which takes place on 18 and 19 October at the ICC in Birmingham.

We are already working with a panel of standards committee members and monitoring officers to develop a range of sessions focused on sharing notable practice, developing high standards and building confidence in managing the local standards framework.

The cost of attending both days of the Assembly has been held at £430 (plus VAT) for the fourth year running, while a one-day place is £230 (plus VAT).

Online booking is now open on our website. We will also be sending out hard copy booking forms to all authorities from mid-March. Further information about the programme and speakers will be added to the website so keep checking back for the most up-to-date information.

Stakeholder Tracker 2009 – ‘A qualitative assessment of advice and guidance’

Every two years Standards for England (SfE) conducts a ‘stakeholder tracker’ in two parts: a quantitative survey, and a qualitative investigation. This research assesses the levels of satisfaction of members and officers in local government with the performance of SfE and their attitudes to the ethical environment. As some of you may recall, the survey was completed last summer. We are now happy to report that the qualitative section of the research, which provides a more in-depth analysis of some of the issues that emerged from the quantitative research, has been completed and is available on our website. **We would like to thank those of you who participated in the research. It is only through your continued support that we are able to track our progress, and identify areas for improvement.**

BMG research carried out this research by holding a number of focus groups with monitoring officers, standards committee members and parish councillors.

Some of the findings:

- The research found that monitoring officers and standards committee members are very positive about the local standards framework. They feel it has 'bedded in' well, and welcome the chance to take ownership of the process of investigating complaints.
- SfE's monitoring officer helpline received positive feedback, and some stakeholders suggested that the service callers receive has improved over the past 12 months.
- Monitoring officers welcome the development of peer and local/regional networks – however, there is some suggestion that a number of authorities may already have some form of networking in place. They would like SfE to provide content for delivery at networking events.
- The research identified several topics on which stakeholders think SfE could provide further guidance such as more information on other standards committee practices, sanctions and proportionality, mediation, guidance specifically for parish councillors, and more advice on the overlap with Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation.

A copy of the full report can be [downloaded here](#).

For further information, please contact:

Tom Bandenburg (Research Assistant) on 0161 817 5427 or email tom.bandenburg@standardsforengland.gov.uk

A REMINDER: Please send us your hearing decision notices

As you may already be aware, authorities are required to send Standards for England (SfE) copies of their hearing decision notices. The legal basis for this can be found in the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 under regulation 20(1)(a). However, not all authorities have complied with this requirement.

Hearing decision notices provide a valuable source of information from which SfE can draw conclusions about how the local standards framework is functioning. We have decided to give greater emphasis to our analysis of the notices and we will share our conclusions with you.

What you need to do

Please send us a copy of the full decision notice for any determinations made by your Standards Committee. At the end of each quarter (from 1 April 2010) we will check whether we have received a decision notice for all the hearings completed that quarter and then contact authorities for any that are missing.

We prefer to receive decision notices as an email attachment in Word or PDF format if possible.

You can send them to authorityreturns@standardsforengland.gov.uk.

If you are unable to send them electronically, please post your decision notices to:

The Monitoring Team, Standards for England, 4th floor, Griffin House

40 Lever Street, Manchester M1 1BB

When writing the decision notices, please ensure that you include all the legal requirements set out in paragraph 20 of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008. We also recommend that you refer to our guidance, which you can find in your local standards framework guide or online at

<http://www.standardsforengland.gov.uk/determinations>

Note: Please do not send us decision notices for any other type of decision such as initial assessments, reviews or consideration meetings. This is not a legal requirement and we will not be using them in our analysis.

What we will do

We will use the notices to help widen our knowledge of how the local standards framework is operating and provide some context to the quarterly returns data. The notices may also highlight areas where we can produce new guidance or improve on what we have already published.

Thank you for your co-operation. We will keep you informed of how the decision notices help us to support the local standards framework.

Adjudication Panel for England becomes known as First-tier Tribunal (Local Government Standards in England)

On the 18th January the functions of the Adjudication Panel for England were transferred to the First-tier Tribunal (Local Government Standards in England) and the Adjudication Panel for England was abolished. The First-tier Tribunal sits in the General Regulatory Chamber with Charity, Gambling, Information, Estate Agents, Claims Management, Consumer Credit and Transport Tribunals.

The role of the First-tier Tribunal is to hear cases referred to it by an Ethical Standards Officer or a Standards Committee following an investigation. The Tribunal will also hear appeals by a subject member against the decision of a Standards Committee.

There have been changes to the powers and procedures of the Tribunal.

Powers and Procedures

The First-tier Tribunal now has additional powers and procedures. It has the power to summon witnesses or require witnesses to produce documents relating to its hearings.

All Tribunal hearings can now be conducted either orally or by written representations with the consent of all parties.

Hearings can be conducted by less than 3 Tribunal members.

The President of the Adjudication Panel for England has been appointed as a Principle Judge of the First-tier Tribunal, legal members are now Judges and lay members are members.

Appeals

Previously any appeal from the Adjudication Panel was heard at the High Court. This process has now changed. Appeals will now be heard by the Upper Tribunal. The Upper Tribunal is an appellate tribunal created by the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007. The Administrative Appeals Chamber is the part of the Upper Tribunal which hears and decides appeals from decisions of the General Regulatory Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal.

Who can appeal to the Upper Tribunal?

Any party may appeal to the Administrative Appeals Chamber of the Upper Tribunal if they can show that the First-tier Tribunal made an error of law.

Additionally, the subject member has the right to appeal findings of fact, if their appeal is against

(a) a decision that they failed to comply with a code of conduct,

(b) a decision imposing suspension or another sanction

Appeals by other parties

A further change to the appeals process is that if a subject member is successful at the First-tier Tribunal, it is still possible for an Ethical Standards Officer or Standards Committee to appeal on a point of law to the Upper Tribunal. The First-tier Tribunal will notify the subject member if any of these parties wish to appeal.

Costs

The First-tier Tribunal now has the power to make an order for costs if the Tribunal considers that a party has acted unreasonably in bringing, defending or conducting the proceedings. It may make an order for costs following an application or on its own initiative.

This will mean that the Tribunal can award costs against a standards committee, Ethical Standards Officer or subject member if they have acted unreasonably in the conduct of their investigations or hearings. The First-tier Tribunal may also make an award for wasted costs incurred by any legal or other representative where the Tribunal considers that they have acted negligently, improperly or unreasonably in bringing, defending or conducting proceedings.

For more information and detailed guidance please see www.adjudicationpanel.tribunals.gov.uk

Our Risk Based Approach

One of the best practice requirements of a regulator is that they take a risk -based approach to their work: that is they are able to assess risks in their area of regulation and apply their own resources accordingly to keep risks low.

For Standards for England there are three types of risk which concern us.

- Systemic risk – risk which could lead to a widespread failing in the work of the framework or in standards across all authorities
- Sectoral risk – risk which could lead to a failing in standards in a number of similar authorities
- Entity risk – risk of a serious standards failure affecting one of the authorities covered by the local standards framework

Assessing entity, systemic or sectoral risks to standards or the success of the framework allows us to target our effort at those activities, situations or authorities that pose the biggest risk helping ensure we provide value for money.

The Success of the local standards framework relies in part on our ability to see potential pitfalls or risks to standards in advance. For example, the emergence of new technologies such as internet social networking, blogs and Twitter, have presented their own unique challenges to standards. During 2009-10 we were able to produce guidance, place articles in the local government press and give a presentation at a national members' conference on this subject.

Spotting such challenges allows us to provide early advice and guidance to the standards community to help prevent problems arising. We will be developing our approach to systemic and sectoral risk, closely linked to our research programme, to help us identify trends or potential problems, and so offer appropriate advice at the earliest opportunity.

We work closely with authorities where challenging standards issues emerge. Based on our increasing experience supporting these authorities we are developing our plans for managing entity risk.

We intend to prioritise the way we interact with authorities on the basis of our risk assessment of the likelihood and impact of any failure of standards in that authority. Working through our relationship managers we will take a differential approach based on this assessment to satisfy ourselves that authorities are working to minimise risks. We envisage working with 30-40 authorities at our highest level of contact and a further 100-120 at an intermediate level, at any one time.

Typically authorities at the lowest level of risk will be in contact with us only as they go about their routine business in operating the standards framework and sending back the required monitoring data, whereas authorities at the intermediate level might be contacted by relationship managers on a six monthly basis, and those at the highest level contacted or visited more frequently as deemed appropriate.

We will be testing our planned approach and consulting with the regulated community about it over the next six months.

Social networking: an effective medium of communication but not without risk

When it comes to reaching certain groups quickly, cheaply and maintaining control over your message, many councillors find online methods hard to beat.

At the recent Cllr' 10 event, Standards for England and the IDeA ran an interactive session which looked at how councillors can use social networking effectively and ethically to engage with their local communities.

This article highlights some of the key messages from the session for councillors.

- If you use blogs, Facebook or Twitter to help you to carry out your political work, rather than in your private capacity, your obligation to meet certain standards of conduct still applies. You can still be involved in robust political debate and state your opinions strongly – the Code does not exist to gag you or fellow councillors or stop you expressing political views. It does, however, prohibit treating others with disrespect, bullying and bringing one's office or authority into disrepute. It is important if you are blogging or tweeting personally and not in your role as councillor, that you do not act, claim to act, or give the impression that you are acting as a representative of your Authority. It is worth noting that web links to official council websites may give or reinforce the impression that you are representing the council.

- You may use a blog to draw attention to a particular local issue and call the council to account, as you would in a public meeting. However, blog entries ridiculing or attacking particular officers, or making serious accusations about their personal competence or integrity, could amount to disrespect, even bullying, in some circumstances.
- It is worth considering that while the immediacy of social media can be a great benefit, it also has a downside. For example, it is possible for you to Tweet on a matter seconds after leaving the council chamber – long before your opponents have issued press statements. This can result in broadcasting spontaneous remarks that may quickly seem unwise. By the time you have reconsidered and deleted them, they may have been seen by thousands, Facebook-shared, re-Tweeted, linked to, and committed to local headlines. That is fine, if you have got this message across just how you wanted to; less so if your post was an outburst in the heat of the moment. Such remarks are easily withdrawn, apologised for and forgotten when made in person, but posting them on the internet means that they have been published, and in a way that cannot be contained.
- It is important to note that good ethical standards are not limited to the Code of Conduct. While you may not be investigated for using online media, your conduct can still attract adverse publicity, even where the Code does not apply. For example, a regional newspaper recently called a councillor's blog post against a rival party a "toilet-mouthed tirade" saying:

"A [Code] breach it may not have been; childish, crude and demeaning to all who vote or follow politics it certainly was."

It is clear that social networking sites can enhance political debate and add positively to local politics when used correctly. [Click here](#) to see our online guide to blogging.

New Online Guides on Our Website

The Guidance and Information team has produced several new online guides at the end of 2009. They are now available on our website. Here are the titles and links to the guides:

- [Charitable Trustees and declarations of interest under the Code](#)
- [Freemasons and the Code](#)
- [Independent members](#)
- [Notifications to parish and town councils concerning complaints about their members and the Standards](#)
- [Role and appointment of parish and town council reps to the standards committee](#)
- [Blogging quick guide](#)

We hope you find these new pieces of guidance helpful. Please e-mail any feedback you have on our guidance to enquiries@standardsforengland.gov.uk

Standards Committees can take a lead from ‘notable practice’

Research into ‘notable practice’, was carried out jointly by Hull University and the University of Teesside and was finalised in October 2009. It is called ‘notable practice’ to highlight the fact that the tips for success are examples of where particular approaches have worked in certain authorities, rather than ‘set-in-stone’ rules about what should be done.

Bristol City Council standards committee was identified as being particularly effective at facilitating organisational learning, sharing learning with the local government community and acting as hub for other authorities and independent members in the South West. The focus of the case study in South Cambridgeshire was on the standards committee’s proactive approach to the recruitment and retention of independent members.

The research identified nine examples of notable practice in different authorities. Below is the list of the notable practice examples and the case study authorities.

Notable practice	Case study authority
Organisational learning	Bristol City Council
Working with town and parish councils	Taunton Deane Borough Council
Member development	Surrey Police Authority
Working with partnerships	Newark and Sherwood District Council
Recruitment and retention	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Training and development	Herefordshire County Council
Joint standards and audit committees	Runnymede Borough Council
High pressure investigations	Greater London Author
Embedding standards	Newcastle City Coun

Standards committees can now access these case studies, examine details of the notable practice, and benefit from key learning points. The research, 'Assessing the Impact of Standards Committees 2009', can be found at

www.standardsforengland.gov.uk/Resources/Research/2009reports/

Further information

For further information on this paper or any other work undertaken by the Research Team, please contact **Hannah Pearson (Research and Projects Adviser)**, email: hannah.pearson@standardsforengland.gov.uk , ext: 5417

Impartial and Objective Investigators

Standards committees must ensure that they appoint investigators who have the necessary impartiality to conduct investigations with no perception of bias. This principle of impartiality should be applied to external and internal investigators alike. It is important that any external investigators are and appear to be impartial; a characteristic which should form part of any selection criteria applied when choosing one.

One of the key benefits of reciprocal arrangements with other authorities is that they enable authorities to pass investigations involving their own employees to another council. It is the monitoring officer's responsibility to ensure they select an impartial investigator.

Have your say

Has your authority or standards committee developed an innovative way of promoting ethical behaviour or delivering the standards framework? Why not share your ideas with over 1,000 other council officers and standards committee members on the Standards Forum?

You can use the Forum to discuss anything you find topical in this Bulletin with fellow council officers or standards committee members. It provides a place to network, ask questions, share good practice and make recommendations.

There are currently over 100 posts on more than 40 different topics. Popular topics include:

- Dealing with vexatious complaints
- Developing protocols for informing members
- Promoting ethical behaviour

To have your say, visit:

www.standardsforengland.gov.uk/resources/TheStandardsForum/

If you are a member of a standards committee, a monitoring officer or a relevant officer and you are not currently registered for the forum or have any questions please email: forum@standardsforengland.gov.uk

Delay on the New Code of Conduct

As you may be aware a new Code of Conduct for Members will not be laid during this Parliamentary session. Communities and Local Government have notified us that the Government is concentrating on financial instruments and so there will not be Parliamentary time available for the Code.

In practice this means that a new Code will not now be laid until after a general election.