



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 20TH MAY 2009 AT 6.00 P.M.

CONFERENCE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

MEMBERS: Independent Members: Mr. N. A. Burke, Ms. D. Roberts and Mrs. N. E. Trigg
Councillors: Miss D. H. Campbell JP, Mrs. A. E. Doyle and E. C. Tibby
Parish Councils' Representatives: Mr. J. Cypher and Mr. I. A. Hodgetts
Observer: Mr. S. Malek (Non-voting Deputy Parish Councils' Representative)

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman for the ensuing municipal year
2. Election of Vice-Chairman for the ensuing municipal year
3. To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitutes
4. Declarations of Interest
5. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 31st March 2009 (Pages 1 - 12)
6. Council Decisions (Pages 13 - 16)

[To receive a report informing the Committee of the decisions made by the Council at its meeting on 29th April 2009 in relation to the terms of office of the Parish Council's Representatives on the Standards Committee and the Planning Services Code of Practice.]

7. Standards Board for England final reports on alleged breaches of the Bromsgrove District Council Code of Conduct (Pages 17 - 28)

[To note the position in relation to the final reports of the Standards Board for England's Ethical Standards Officer on investigations undertaken following three separate complaints against a District Councillor for alleged breaches of the Bromsgrove District Council Code of Conduct.]

8. Monitoring Officer's Report (Pages 29 - 40)

[To receive a report from the Monitoring Officer on matters of relevance to the Committee.]

9. Parish Councils' Representatives Report

[To receive an oral update from the Parish Councils' Representatives on any matters of relevance to the Committee.]

10. Review of the Local Assessment Regime (Pages 41 - 52)

[To receive a report on the findings of the review undertaken by officers on certain aspects of the local assessment of complaints about Members regime.]

11. Review of operation of the Committee

[Members are asked to give consideration to the general operation of the Committee over the last twelve months and to comment on any aspects of this as appropriate. No separate report.]

12. Work Programme (Pages 53 - 58)

[To consider the future Work Programme of the Committee.]

13. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

14. To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt and/or confidential information:

"RESOLVED: that the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds:

a) that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of

Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraphs of that part being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
15 & 16	1, 2, 3 & 7A; and

b) that under Section 100 A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, they involve the likely disclosure of confidential information, namely information provided under Section 63 of the Local Government Act as part of an Ethical Standards Officer's investigation under Part III of the Local Government Act 2000:

<u>Item No.</u>
15 & 16."

15. To confirm the accuracy of the confidential minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 31st March 2009 (Pages 59 - 60)
16. Standards Board for England final reports on alleged breaches of the Bromsgrove District Council Code of Conduct (Pages 61 - 94)

[To note the final reports of the Standards Board for England's Ethical Standards Officer on investigations undertaken following three separate complaints against a District Councillor for alleged breaches of the Bromsgrove District Council Code of Conduct.]

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

12th May 2009

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 31ST MARCH 2009 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Independent Members: Mrs. N. E. Trigg (Chairman), Mr. N. A. Burke (Vice-Chairman) and Ms. D. Roberts
Councillors: Miss D. H. Campbell JP (during Minute No's. 51/08 to part of 59/08 and 67/08 and 68/08), S. P. Shannon and E. C. Tibby
Parish Councils' Representatives: Mr. J. Cypher and Mr. I. A. Hodgetts

Officers: Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. D. Warren and Ms. D. Parker-Jones

51/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received from Mr. S. Malek, non-voting Deputy Parish Councils' Representative on the Committee and Committee observer.

52/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

53/08 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 11th December 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

54/08 STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND FINAL REPORT ON ALLEGED BREACHES OF PARISH AND DISTRICT CODES OF CONDUCT

Further to a referral from the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee in July 2008, the Committee received, for information only, the final report of the Standards Board for England's Ethical Standards Officer on the outcome of the investigation into an allegation that Councillor Roger Hollingworth had breached both the Alvechurch Parish Council and Bromsgrove District Council Codes of Conduct. It was the finding of the Ethical Standards Officer that there was no evidence of any failure by Councillor Hollingworth to comply with either of the Codes of Conduct in question.

A copy of the Ethical Standards Officer's final report, which was confidential as it contained exempt information in accordance with paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 7A of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, appeared later in the agenda, with a copy of the Standards Board's public case summary of the report appearing in the open part of the agenda.

RESOLVED that the Standards Board for England's Ethical Standards Officer's finding of no breach in relation to the allegations against Councillor Hollingworth be noted.

55/08 **MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Committee noted the report of the Monitoring Officer and the following issues were raised:

Member Investigations and Associated Matters

Officers advised of an amendment to the figures detailed in the Local Assessment Statistics table appended to the report, in that of the 15 complaints received since the introduction of local assessment, 8 had resulted in no further action being taken, with 5 having been referred to the Standards Board for England for investigation. The outcomes of all of the Standards Board investigations had now been received, all of which had resulted in a finding of no breach of the Code of Conduct. A report detailing the Standards Board's public case summaries for 2 of the complaints appeared separately in the agenda, with the remaining 3 cases to be reported on at the next meeting of the Committee in May.

The Committee requested that a future breakdown be provided as to the nature of the complaints received. It was also agreed that Sub-Committee decision notices would be copied to all members of the Standards Committee in future in order to keep members updated with complaints.

New Local Performance Indicator - public awareness of the elected Member complaints system

The Monitoring Officer advised of the likelihood, at some point in the future, of the introduction of a national performance indicator relating to public awareness of the elected Member complaints system. In anticipation of this, a new local indicator had been included in the Council's Business Plan on the percentage of people who were aware of the system. The Monitoring Officer detailed existing Council mechanisms which could be utilised in this regard, which would also be useful in publicising the system generally. Articles had appeared in both the local press and the Council's 'Together Bromsgrove' publication, with a future regular slot in Together Bromsgrove to be looked at.

In addition to raising public awareness of the complaints process, positive marketing of both the Members' Code of Conduct and the Standards Committee was felt to be of equal importance; to ensure the public, at both district and parish level, was fully aware of the ethical governance framework in local government. Members suggested that there could be a publicity stand at any relevant Council/community events and that the Worcestershire Hub could be used as a means for promoting the key elements of the ethical framework, with accompanying literature to be drawn up for this.

It was noted that public awareness of the elected Member complaints system was linked to the Review of Local Assessment and Determination of

Complaints report at agenda item 9, which would involve the Committee prioritising the various aspects of the work required for the review.

Redditch Borough Council's Standards Committee

The assistance available to Redditch Borough Council's Standards Committee, should a request for such assistance be made to Bromsgrove District Council, was noted.

West Mercia Forum of Independent Members

Ms. Roberts, Mr. Cypher and Mr. Hodgetts provided feedback on the West Mercia Independent Members' Forum meeting which they had attended on 4th February 2009, which they had found to be very interesting and informative. Dr Robert Chilton, Chair of the Standards Board, was guest speaker at the Forum and had given a speech on the Standard's Board's direction of travel.

A number of issues had been discussed at the meeting, including problems which had arisen with parish and town councils, which it was noted had arisen mostly as a result of such councils not having their own membership body which they could approach for advice and assistance. The Monitoring Officer stated that the visits which she and the Deputy Monitoring Officer had undertaken to parish councils within the district had assisted in averting procedural downfalls, and that whilst parish councils might not always have operated within the required structures this had in no way been intentional but had arisen as a result of their being unaware of the requirements. The proposed establishment of a training programme for the parish councils on ethical governance issues (for which a separate report appeared later in the agenda) would also assist with this.

A member of the Committee who had also been a parish councillor commented that they did not think the public was aware of the systems in place for making complaints against parish councillors, which again would be addressed as part of the Review of Local Assessment and Determination of Complaints report later in the agenda.

Update on referral of complaint to Monitoring Officer for Investigation

The Chairman sought clarification on the current position in relation to the complaint which the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee had referred to the Monitoring Officer for local investigation.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that the matter had been referred to the Council's Investigating Officer and that once the Investigating Officer's final report was available a meeting of the Standards Committee would be convened in accordance with Regulation 17 of The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008. At that meeting, and on consideration of the report, the Committee would be required to make one of the following findings:

- (i) that it accepted the Monitoring Officer's finding of no failure (a finding of acceptance); or

- (ii) that the matter should be considered at a hearing of the Standards Committee conducted under Regulation 18 (of the said Regulations); or
- (iii) that the matter should be referred to the Adjudication Panel for England for determination.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report be noted; and
- (b) that any action points detailed in the preamble above be acted upon and reported back to the Committee as appropriate.

56/08 **PARISH COUNCILS' REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT**

Mr. Cypher referred to the separate reports which appeared later in the agenda in relation to the establishment of a training programme on ethical governance issues for the parish councils and the terms of office of Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee, the proposals for which had been considered by and had received support from the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils ('CALC').

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

57/08 **TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR PARISH COUNCILS**

Consideration was given to a report which proposed the establishment of a training programme for the parish councils on ethical governance issues. It was noted that both the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils ('CALC') and the Parish Councils' Forum had been consulted on the proposal and were in support of this.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that officers would begin rolling out the programme of training to the parishes once the new Members' Code of Conduct had been had been published and the accompanying guidance distributed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the proposal for the establishment of an ethical governance training programme for the parish councils be approved;
- (b) that the Monitoring Officer be charged with formulating such a training programme, based on the wishes of the parish councils and in accordance with the general terms outlined in the report;
- (c) that details of the final training programme be referred to the Standards Committee for information; and
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee, to make any necessary changes to the training programme in the light of any significant changes to the Members' Code of Conduct and/or new guidance/legislation issued in relation to ethical governance.

58/08 **TERMS OF OFFICE OF PARISH COUNCILS' REPRESENTATIVES ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered a report which contained proposals to extend, for the 2009 appointments, the current terms of office of the Parish Councils' Representatives (including the Deputy Parish Councils' Representative) on the Standards Committee, and for a further review of the terms of office of the parish representatives to take place in 2011, in line with the next round of parish council elections.

Mr. Hodgetts and Mr. Cypher, the Parish Councils' Representatives on the Committee, advised that the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils ('CALC') had considered the proposals at its meeting on 4th March 2009 and was in support of these.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the terms of office of the Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee for 2009 be extended from one year to two years; and
- (b) that a further review of the terms of office of the Parish Councils' Representatives be undertaken in 2011, following the next round of parish council elections.

59/08 **REVIEW OF LOCAL ASSESSMENT AND DETERMINATION OF COMPLAINTS**

The Committee considered a report on a review of the local assessment and determination of complaints process which had been introduced in May 2008 and for which the Standards Committee had adopted processes and procedures for a trial period of 12 months.

Members agreed the extent and timetable of the review (as per the table appended to these minutes), with a report on the high priority areas to be referred to the May meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the table of items and priorities for the review of local assessment and determination of complaints appended to these minutes be approved.

60/08 **OMBUDSMAN STATISTICS**

Members received a report which provided a six monthly update on Ombudsman statistics.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) that the Committee Work Programme be amended to include two reports on Ombudsman statistics per year as follows:
 - (i) full report in September, to include the annual statistics (final version) and comparison with other neighbouring authorities; and

- (ii) interim update (based on records maintained by the Senior Solicitor) in February/March.

61/08 **REVIEW OF PROTOCOL ON RELATIONS BETWEEN MEMBERS**

Further to Minute 48/08 of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 11th December 2008, the Committee considered a report which asked whether a recommendation should be made to full Council that the Protocol on Relations between Members be reviewed.

It was noted from the report that the Group Leaders had been consulted on the Protocol and that they generally welcomed the existence of this as it gave a framework within which they could resolve any inter-Member issues in a structured, albeit informal, manner. Members had confirmed that there were a number of instances when they had relied on the Protocol to resolve issues and had found that it had worked.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that no recommendation be made to full Council that the Protocol on Relations between Members be reviewed; and
- (b) that the Protocol be looked at by the Standards Committee again in twelve months' time.

62/08 **REVIEW OF MEMBER-OFFICER PROTOCOL**

Further to Minute 49/08 of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 11th December 2008, the Committee considered a report which asked whether a recommendation should be made to full Council that the Member-Officer Protocol be reviewed.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the views of the Group Leaders as to the operation and effectiveness of the Protocol had been sought and that the Leaders felt the Protocol to have been well used, with this having been referred to on a frequent basis, and that they would be reluctant to lose this as they were satisfied that the current process worked well. Officer feedback on the Protocol had also been positive, with it being deemed an example of good practice for such a protocol to be in place.

It was noted that some general references in the Protocol were out of date and that officers would therefore need to make a few minor amendments to this.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that, whilst noting some minor amendments were required to the Member-Officer Protocol, no recommendation be made to full Council that the Protocol be reviewed; and
- (b) that the Protocol be looked at by the Standards Committee again in twelve months' time.

63/08 **PLANNING SERVICES CODE OF PRACTICE**

The Committee considered a report which recommended that the Council's Planning Services Code of Practice be reviewed and which sought suggestions from Members for areas for consideration for inclusion in the review.

Officers advised that the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors had recently updated the Model Members' Planning Code of Good Practice and that the Council's current Code was out of date.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that a review of the Council's Planning Services Code of Practice be undertaken by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with Group Leaders, the Planning Committee, the Standards Committee and individual Members; and
- (b) that the scope of the review also include the Planning Committee Procedure Rules contained within the Council's Constitution and the Public Speaking at Planning Committee Meetings guidance leaflet to see whether any aspects of these could be combined.

64/08 **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS - 2009/10**

A report advising of the meeting dates of the Standards Committee for the 2009/10 Municipal Year was submitted.

RESOLVED that the Calendar of Meetings for the Standards Committee for 2009/10 be noted.

65/08 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme.

RESOLVED that, subject to the proposed changes to the Work Programme highlighted in the report, together with the decisions made earlier in the meeting in relation to the Committee's consideration of future reviews of the Protocol on Relations between Members and the Member-Officer Protocol, the Work Programme be approved.

66/08 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED that, under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraphs of that part being as set out below, and that it was in the public interest to do so:

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
67/08	1, 2, 3 & 7A
68/08	7A

67/08 **STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND FINAL REPORT ON ALLEGED BREACHES OF PARISH AND DISTRICT COUNCIL CODES OF CONDUCT**

Further to Minute 54/08 above, the Committee received, for information only, the final report of the Standards Board for England's Ethical Standards Officer on the outcome of the investigation into an allegation that Councillor Roger Hollingworth had breached both the Alvechurch Parish Council and Bromsgrove District Council Codes of Conduct. It was the finding of the Ethical Standards Officer that there was no evidence of any failure by Councillor Hollingworth to comply with either of the Codes of Conduct in question.

In a covering letter which accompanied the Ethical Standards Officer's report the Committee had been invited to comment to the Standards Board on the helpfulness of receiving such reports of investigations, and on anything that might make the reports more useful in the future. The Committee therefore agreed a response in this regard.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Standards Board for England's Ethical Standards Officer's finding of no breach in relation to the allegations against Councillor Hollingworth be noted; and
- (b) that officers write to the Standards Board with the Committee's views on the helpfulness of the Ethical Standards Officer's final report.

68/08 **MONITORING OFFICER'S CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**

The Committee received a confidential report of the Monitoring Officer on a matter which was exempt in accordance with paragraph 7A of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as it contained information which was subject to an obligation of confidentiality.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.03 p.m.

Chairman

Agreed items and priorities for the review of local assessment and determination of complaints

	Summary of issue	Reason/comments	Priority
1	Review of publicity to the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure appropriate levels of awareness. A new performance indicator is to be introduced to measure the % of people who are aware of the elected member complaints system. 	High
	<p>Note: In relation to 1 above, it was agreed that this should link in with publicity of both the Members' Code of Conduct and the work/role of the Standards Committee, such publicity to be undertaken at both district and parish level.</p>		
2	Joint working with neighbouring authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations to be published in May to enable this. 	Low
3	Constitution of the main Standards Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there sufficient members to deal appropriately with all aspects of the process? Should a recommendation to Council be considered to increase the size of the Committee? Should there be a Cabinet member on the Committee? Should parish representatives be elected (as opposed to co-opted)? 	High
4	Composition of the sub-committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separation of membership of assessment and final determination sub-committees? Are the sub-committees working well? Final Determination Sub-Committee composition – should it be revisited? Should this be undertaken by the full Standards Committee or a sub-committee? 	Defer until have experience of final determination hearings.
5	Receipt of Investigating Officer's report (Regulation 17(1) hearing)		Defer until have experience of hearings.

6	Monitoring Officer pre-complaint protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some authorities instruct the MO to try to resolve complaints before referring them to the Assessment Sub-Committee—should this be considered? 	Rejected outright
7	Complaint form to be reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider it from the perspective of members of the public. Should it be more specific in terms of identifying the part of the Code which has been breached? Should it ask the complainant to identify the remedy sought (to identify complaints about service delivery etc rather than conduct). Should it be scrapped? 	High (7, 8 & 9 to be taken together)
8	Guidance to be reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider it from the perspective of members of the public. Inclusion of flow charts. 	
9	Review of website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider it from the perspective of members of the public. Submission of complaints on-line. 	
10	Review of report presented to the Assessment Sub-Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should it include a suggestion as to the part of the Code which may have been breached? Should it include recommendations from officers? Should it include transcripts of meetings or other documentation other than minutes or other publicly available documents? Should the sub-committee's powers be clearly set out? 	Low

11	Review of assessment criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were based on those in the SBE guidance. Based on practical experience, could these be improved? 	High
12	Notification to subject member of complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At what point should the subject member be notified of the complaint? Currently they are not notified until after the Assessment Sub-Committee has met. 	High
13	Decision Notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are currently based on the SBE model. Could they be improved? • Should they include details of the members sitting on the committee? (NB – consider the <i>difference between Regulation 8 and Regulation 11 notices</i>) • Should these be published more widely? • Should they include more information about review? 	High
14	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should a form be developed and sent out as a matter of course in the case of each case not referred for investigation? • Should these take the form of a re-hearing or a review of the adequacy of the process? (There is a divergence of opinion on this in practice.) • Should the same officer advise the review sub-committee as advised the assessment sub-committee? 	High
15	Referrals to the MO for other action/adjournment of assessment to enable the MO to explore the possibility of other action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be explored in the light of advice from the SBE. 	Await SBE guidance.

16	Referrals to the Adjudication Panel under Regulation 17 (serious cases not appropriate for consideration by the Standards Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The prior consent of the President of the APE is required before the Standards Committee may refer a matter to the APE. How is the MO to be authorised to seek the consent of the APE prior to consideration of the matter by the Standards Committee. 	Low Leave until have experience of APE referrals.
17	Final Determinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much guidance should be given to the subject member on how to prepare? Emphasise the slot in the process for the subject member to make representations on sanctions and any mitigating circumstances. 	Officers to implement separately.
18	Parish Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notification to parish councils concerning complaints (see Town & Parish Standard issue 4), to prepare advice for parish councils. 	Officers to liaise separately with the parishes on this.
19	Recommendations to full Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who should present these on behalf of the Standards Committee? 	Low/medium

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

20TH MAY 2009

COUNCIL DECISIONS - TERMS OF OFFICE OF PARISH COUNCILS' REPRESENTATIVES ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND PLANNING SERVICES CODE OF PRACTICE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

To inform the Committee of the decisions made by the Council at its meeting on 29th April 2009 in relation to:

- (i) the terms of office of the Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee; and
- (ii) the Planning Services Code of Practice.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the contents of the report be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

1. **Terms of office of Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee**

3.1 At its meeting on 31st March 2009 the Standards Committee considered a report on proposals to extend the current terms of office of the Parish Councils' Representatives on the Committee, and for a further review of the terms of office to take place in 2011.

3.2 The Committee supported the proposals and recommended these to the Council.

It was RESOLVED:

- (a) that the terms of office of the Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee for 2009 be extended from one year to two years; and

- (b) that a further review of the terms of office of the Parish Councils' Representatives be undertaken in 2011, following the next round of parish council elections.

II. Planning Services Code of Practice

3.3 At its meeting on 31st March 2009 the Standards Committee considered a report which recommended that the Council's Planning Services Code of Practice be reviewed and which sought suggestions from Members for areas for consideration for inclusion in the review.

3.4 The Committee supported a review of the Code and also recommended additional areas for inclusion within the scope of the review.

It was RESOLVED:

- (a) that a review of the Council's Planning Services Code of Practice be undertaken by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with Group Leaders, the Planning Committee, the Standards Committee and individual Members; and
- (b) that the scope of the review also include the Planning Committee Procedure Rules contained within the Council's Constitution and the Public Speaking at Planning Committee Meetings guidance leaflet to see whether any aspects of these could be combined.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

This report does not directly link with any of the Council's objectives.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no risks associated with this report.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

None

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	None
Environmental	None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	No
Executive Director - Services	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. APPENDICES

None

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 31st March 2009.

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 29th April 2009.

CONTACT OFFICER

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

20TH MAY 2009

STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND FINAL REPORTS ON ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT – CASE REFERENCES: SBE01263-30OBA, SBE01262-30OBA & SBE01515-AAGC9

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Non–Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 In June and July 2008 the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee considered three separate allegations that Councillor Peter McDonald ("the Subject Member") had breached the Code of Conduct of Bromsgrove District Council.
- 1.2 In each of the cases the Assessment Sub-Committee determined that the allegation should be referred to the Standards Board for England for investigation.
- 1.3 The Standards Board has now investigated the allegations and the final reports of the Ethical Standards Officer are being referred to the Standards Committee for information.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the final reports of the Standards Board for England's Ethical Standards Officer in relation to the outcomes of the investigations into the three separate allegations against Councillor McDonald be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following referrals from the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee, the Standards Board for England has conducted, under section 59 of the Local Government Act 2000, investigations into the three separate allegations that Councillor Peter McDonald has breached the Code of Conduct of Bromsgrove District Council.
- 3.2 In each of the cases the Ethical Standards Officer has made a finding that the Subject Member did not fail to comply with the Code.

- 3.3 Copies of the Ethical Standards Officer's final reports can be found at agenda item 16. These reports are exempt in accordance with paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 7A of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as they contain information which relate to an individual, are likely to reveal the identity of an individual, relate to the business affairs of particular persons and of the relevant authority and are subject to an obligation of confidentiality. These reports are also confidential in accordance with Section 63 of the Local Government Act 2000 which prohibits the disclosure of information gathered during an ethical standards officer's investigation, save for in certain circumstances. The Ethical Standards Officer responsible for the reports has stated that the reports should not be disclosed outside of the Standards Committee.
- 3.4 The reports are for noting only as the Standards Committee has no powers to investigate or make its own findings on the cases. The reports are also being brought to the Committee in order to assist the Committee in the discharge of its functions under section 54 of Part III of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, in particular "promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by members" and "advising, training or arranging to train members.....on matters relating to the authority's code of conduct".
- 3.5 Copies of the Standards Board's public summaries of the Ethical Standards Officer's reports, which have been published on the organisations website and which may be disclosed, are appended to this report.
- 3.6 In cases where there is a finding of no breach the Subject Member has the choice of whether a notice detailing the Standards Board's findings appears in the local press.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced primary legislation which set out the basis for the implementation of a Members' Code of Conduct. This was amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (LGPIHA) 2007 insofar as it related to the application of the Members' Code of Conduct to their private lives. Further details have been provided by the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 and the Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001. The local assessment regime was introduced by the LGPIHA 2007, and further expanded in the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 which also set out the rules and procedures governing the investigation and determination of complaints.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

Improvement – it is vital for the reputation and credibility of the Council that complaints against elected Members are seen to be robustly investigated.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

The main risk associated with the details included in this report is loss of reputation. This risk is being managed as follows:

Risk Register: Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Key Objective Ref No: 3

Key Objective: Effective ethical governance

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

None

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	Adherence to the Code of Conduct is a key element of sound governance
Community Safety including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	None
Environmental	None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Corporate Director (Services)	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	No
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards

14. APPENDICES

Standards Board's public summaries of Ethical Standards Officer's final reports.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18th June 2008 & 15th July 2008 Standards Assessment Sub-Committee papers (confidential).
- 18th June 2008 & 15th July 2008 Standards Assessment Sub-Committee Decision Notices (public).

CONTACT OFFICER

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Case summary

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SBE case number	SBE01263 – 300BA
member	Councillor Peter McDonald
authority	Bromsgrove District Council
allegation	The member failed to treat others with respect and brought their office or authority into disrepute
date received	2 July 2008
date completed	25 March 2009
SBE outcome	The ethical standards officer found the member did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct

Summary

The complainant alleged that at a meeting attended by, among others, officials from central government and the Audit Commission, Councillor Peter McDonald responded to the council leaders repeated interruptions by saying, "Shut your mouth or we will have a big row".

The leader stated that he interrupted Councillor McDonald several times because Councillor McDonald persisted in asking questions which the leader felt were not appropriate for the meeting.

The complainant stated that there was a stunned silence after Councillor McDonald's outburst.

Councillor McDonald stated that, when the leader interrupted him for the third or fourth time to prevent him from criticising the council's administration, he told the leader, "If you want a row, we'll have one." He accepts that the meeting was not the place for a row, but that he was annoyed about the repeated interruptions from the leader when he was trying to speak. Councillor McDonald considered that a council leader should be able to cope

with the rough and tumble of politics and such comments, but believed with hindsight that he ought to have appealed to the chair of the meeting rather than saying what he did to the leader.

The ethical standards officer noted that, while it was not disputed that Councillor McDonald made a sharp personal comment to the leader, the exact words he used were disputed. However, the ethical standards officer considered that he did not need to resolve that dispute of fact in order to reach his finding.

The ethical standards officer viewed Councillor McDonald's statement to the leader as inappropriate and discourteous in such a forum, even if provoked. However, the ethical standards officer did not consider that the conduct amounted to a breach of the Code of Conduct. The ethical standards officer recognised that, during robust political debate, members will occasionally make strong and discourteous remarks. While not condoning discourtesy in meetings, the ethical standards officer accepted that councillors have more scope to be robust and direct with each other, without breaching the Code, than they do when addressing officers or the general public. The ethical standards officer also noted that the incident was quickly passed over and that the business of the meeting was not hampered.

The ethical standards officer found that the member did not fail to comply with the Code.

relevant paragraphs of the Code of Conduct

The allegations in this case relate to paragraphs 3(1) and 5 of the Code of Conduct.

recommendations

Ends.

Case summary

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SBE case number	SBE01262-30OBA
member	Councillor Peter McDonald
authority	Bromsgrove District Council
allegation	The member failed to treat others with respect and bullied another person
date received	2 July 2008
date completed	25 March 2009
SBE outcome	The ethical standards officer found that the member did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct

Summary

The complainant alleged that, at a meeting of Bromsgrove District Council's scrutiny steering board which he was chairing, Councillor Peter McDonald addressed two senior council officers in an aggressively confrontational manner that amounted to bullying.

It was alleged that Councillor McDonald questioned Officer A, who was there to make a presentation and answer questions on a major council project, aggressively, by 'banging' questions at her without giving her time to draw breath or gather her thoughts. Officer A stated that she found Councillor McDonald's style of questioning difficult. She expected him to ask probing questions, but felt he did not let her answer before firing more questions at her, and talked over her.

It was further alleged that when Officer B interjected to try to diffuse an argument or difficult situation, Councillor McDonald cut her off in a way that the complainant considered rude.

Officer B stated that she did not think Councillor McDonald was particularly rude to her during what was a difficult and heated meeting.

Councillor McDonald stated that he did not think that he had been aggressive, but that Officer A and other officers present could not answer his questions. He thought that, as Officer A was the senior officer responsible for the project, who had come to the meeting to address that particular matter, she would have been fully briefed and able to answer him. She had not, to him, seemed distressed or upset and he did not think his questions would cause her to be so. Councillor McDonald did not feel that he had bullied Officer A and said that if he had offended her, he was deeply sorry.

Councillor McDonald recalled Officer B intervening in something he was saying to another member. He stated that he replied, "I am the chair, and I ask the questions". Councillor McDonald did not consider that he was rude or abrupt, but was trying to keep order at a difficult meeting. He said that, if he was rude or abrupt to anyone, he would be the first to apologise.

In reaching his conclusions, the ethical standards officer was able to listen to a tape recording of the meeting and to judge Councillor McDonald's exchanges with the officers for himself.

The ethical standards officer considered the way Councillor McDonald had questioned Officer A had been so robust and assertive that it bordered on rude. He did not appear to be listening to Officer A's answers, and on occasions intervened forcefully to challenge what she was saying before she had finished her response to his previous question. It was clear from the tape that Councillor McDonald held strong and predetermined views on the subject discussed.

However, the ethical standards officer did not consider that Councillor McDonald failed to treat Officer A with respect, or that he had bullied her, such that his conduct amounted to a breach of the Code of Conduct. In reaching this decision, the ethical standards officer took into account that Officer A is a senior officer who had attended to answer questions on a particular topic. Members could expect her to be well briefed and knowledgeable on that subject, and although Councillor McDonald's delivery was robust and assertive and allowed the officer little time to respond fully, all Councillor McDonald's questions were about the topic Officer A was there to discuss.

In respect of Councillor McDonald's exchange with Officer B following her interjection, while it was sharp and direct in tone, the ethical standards officer considered that in the context of a heated discussion, it did not amount to bullying or disrespect. The ethical standards officer took into account that Officer B did not feel that Councillor McDonald was particularly rude to her and that Officer B considered the context to be one of a difficult meeting.

Therefore the ethical standards officer concluded that Councillor McDonald did not breach the Code of Conduct.

relevant paragraphs of the Code of Conduct

The allegations in this case relate to paragraphs 3(1) and 3(2)(b) of the Code of Conduct.

recommendations

Ends.

Case summary

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SBE case number	SBE01515 – AAGC9
member	Councillor Peter McDonald
authority	Bromsgrove District Council
allegation	The member failed to treat others with respect and bullied another person
date received	18 July 2008
date completed	25 March 2009
SBE outcome	The ethical standards officer found that the member did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct

Summary

The complainant alleged that at a members' training session on the subject of 'Value for Money', Councillor Peter McDonald failed to treat the two presenting officers with respect, and tried to bully and intimidate them into commenting on a political decision made by members to have officers, not external consultants, presenting the training. It was alleged that this put the officers in the intolerable position of being pressed for an answer.

One of the officers stated that Councillor McDonald tried to raise concerns about two particular council projects, which was not the purpose of the training session. She found his attitude quite aggressive and intimidating but she did not consider that she was bullied. She stated that Councillor McDonald said at one point, "I would rather be at home watching television than listening to you two".

The other officer stated that she found Councillor McDonald's manner antagonistic, but that the alleged incident was over quickly when he and others in his political group left the session shortly afterwards.

Councillor McDonald said he had not realised until he arrived at the training session that it was to be provided by officers. He asked why consultants were not being used because, in his opinion, it put members in a difficult position to be challenging what officers were saying. He stated that if the two officers were upset by his remarks, he would wish to apologise to them.

Councillor McDonald also stated that the session seemed to be going into the direction of officers defending the council's position. He said he had told the meeting that value for money was also about opportunity cost, and that as he had been expecting external facilitators to be presenting the training, he was missing the opportunity to watch football on the television that evening.

Councillor McDonald stated that he and the other members of the Labour group present then left the meeting, and that he did so because he felt it was too risky to stay and risk being accused of challenging officers. He said that the decision was not pre-arranged and not a political stunt.

The ethical standards officer noted that, while there were differing recollections of what Councillor McDonald said to officers, Councillor McDonald did not dispute that he questioned why they were providing the training and that referred to missing the opportunity to watch football on television to be there.

The ethical standards officer also noted that it was disputed whether Councillor McDonald was intimidating in his manner when he questioned the officers. However, the ethical standards officer considered that, on the balance of probabilities, Councillor McDonald did question the officers in a manner that was aggressive or antagonistic in tone. The ethical standards officer considered this to be inappropriate but, on a finely balanced judgement, he concluded that Councillor McDonald's mode of questioning was disrespectful or bullying within the terms of the Code of Conduct. In reaching this decision, the ethical standards officer took into account that the two officers held very senior positions and were used to dealing with members and handling difficult or challenging questions from them.

The ethical standards officer took the view that Councillor McDonald's decision to walk out of the training session was potentially disrespectful to the officers presenting it, and at the very least, discourteous to them. However, the ethical standards officer had regard to the fact that Councillor McDonald had not intended to insult the officers and that they were, as senior officers, fully aware of the party political environment in which they were presenting the session. As such, the ethical standards officer did not consider that Councillor McDonald's actions were sufficient to amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct.

relevant paragraphs of the Code of Conduct

The allegations in this case to paragraphs 3(1) and 3(2)(b) of the Code of Conduct.

recommendations

Ends.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

20TH MAY 2009

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Standards Committee has requested the Monitoring Officer to report to each meeting of the Standards Committee on a number of items, and this report sets out the latest position in relation to those items.
- 1.2 Any further updates will be reported on orally at the meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are requested to note the report and to comment on any aspects of this as appropriate; and
- 2.2 to determine whether, as detailed under paragraph 3.7 of the report, they wish for a final draft of the Committee's Annual Report for 2008/09 to be referred to Committee, or whether authority can be delegated to the Monitoring, in consultation with the Chairman, to finalise this.

3. BACKGROUND

Member Investigations and Associated Matters

- 3.1 The final reports of the Standards Board for England's Ethical Standards Officer in relation to the remaining 3 complaints referred to the Standards Board for investigation have now been received. In each of the cases the Ethical Standards Officer has found that there was no failure by the Subject Member to comply with the District Council's Code of Conduct. A separate report, which includes a copy of the Standards Board's public summaries in relation to the complaints, can be found at agenda item 7. The Investigating Officer's reports, which are not for public disclosure as they contain both exempt information in accordance with paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 7A of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and confidential information in accordance with Section 100 A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, appear at agenda item 16.

- 3.2 The investigation into the complaint referred to the Monitoring Officer for local investigation has now commenced. Once the Investigating Officer's final report is available a meeting of the Standards Committee will be convened in accordance with Regulation 17 of The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, at which point the Committee will, on consideration of the report, be required to make one of the following findings:
- (i) that it accepts the Monitoring Officer's finding of no failure ("a finding of acceptance"); or
 - (ii) that the matter should be considered at a hearing of the Standards Committee conducted under Regulation 18 [of the said Regulations]; or
 - (iii) that the matter should be referred to the Adjudication Panel [for England] for determination.

Complaints for Local Assessment

- 3.3 Since the last meeting of the Standards Committee no complaints have been received and there are no complaints currently awaiting assessment.
- 3.4 A table showing the cumulative totals for local assessment at the time of preparation of this report is attached at Appendix A. Further to the request made at the last meeting of the Committee, details as to the nature of the complaints received to date under local assessment are now included in the table.

Member Training

- 3.5 Members are advised of the following training matters:
- (i) on 17th March 2009 the Council achieved Primary level of the West Midlands Local Government Association Member Development Charter; the required benchmark of best practice in elected Member development and which included 100% of Members having been trained on the Code of Conduct;
 - (ii) on 24th April 2009 the Council achieved Level 3 of the Equality Standards for Local Government - the first district authority in Worcestershire to do so. The Council now joins a select group of 21 out of 238 district councils in England recognized for this level of equality standards, with particular note that 100% of elected Members have been trained in equality and diversity;
 - (iii) at the meeting of full Council in April Members voted for a new overview and scrutiny structure. One of the requests arising from this was that the Audit Board receives detailed training in order to extend its work programme and to ensure Members are given sufficient support in relation to their roles and responsibilities on the Board and to that all appropriate audit functions are being carried out, which the Head of Financial Services is now taking forward;
 - (iv) a Mock Standards Assessment Sub-Committee training session, which was attended by Ms. D. Roberts (recently appointed Independent Member on the Standards Committee), Mr. S. Malek (Deputy Parish

- Councils' Representative on the Standards Committee) and Councillor Mrs. A. Doyle (newly appointed elected Member on the Standards Committee) took place on 11th May 2009; and
- (v) two dates have been established for planning training, including context setting training on 21st May 2009 in advance of a Mock Planning Meeting on 17th June 2009.

Parish Council matters

- 3.6 A report detailing the Council's decision in relation to the Committee's recommendation to extend, for the 2009 appointments, the terms of office of the Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee, and for a further review of the terms of office to take place in 2011, appears at agenda item 6.

3.7 Annual Report of the Standards Committee

Regrettably, it has not been possible for officers to draft a copy of the second Annual Report of the Standards Committee in time for this meeting. As such, this will be circulated to all members of the Committee for comment once available. The Committee is asked to determine whether it wishes to see a final draft of the Report prior to its publication or whether it is happy to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, to finalise this.

3.8 Standards Board Annual Assembly

Members' attention is drawn to the Standards Board Annual Assembly which is taking place on Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th October 2009 at the ICC in Birmingham, at a cost per delegate of £430. Details of the event programme and planned sessions are attached at Appendix B. Any members of the Committee wishing to attend the Assembly are asked to contact the Monitoring Officer as soon as possible to register their interest for this.

3.9 Review of the operation and effectiveness of the Members' Code of Conduct

A report on the review of the operation and effectiveness of the Members' Code of Conduct was listed on the Work Programme for this meeting. However, in view of the impending introduction of the new Code of Conduct it was not felt appropriate for this to be considered by the Committee. Once the new Code of Conduct is adopted by the Council and has been in place for a suitable length of time the Committee will be asked to monitor the operation of this in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced primary legislation which set out the basis for the current ethical governance regime and to enable the implementation of a Members' Code of Conduct. This was amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (LGPIHA) 2007 insofar as it related to the application of the Members' Code of Conduct to their private lives. Further details have been provided by the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 and the Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001. The local assessment regime was introduced by the LGPIHA 2007, and further expanded in the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 which also set out the rules and procedures governing the investigation and determination of complaints.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

This item does not link directly with any Council objectives.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Risk of challenge to Council decisions; and
- Risk of complaints about elected members.

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Risk Register: Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Key Objective Ref No: 3
Key Objective: Effective ethical governance

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

None

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
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Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	None
Environmental	None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	No
Executive Director - Services	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards

14. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Local Assessment Statistics.
Appendix B - Standards Board Annual Assembly details.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Local Assessment Statistics

Period ¹	Complaints received	Complaints assessed	Reviews conducted	No further action	Referred for other action	Referred for local investigation	Referred to SBE...	...and accepted by SBE	SBE outcome	Final determination
Total	15	15 ²	0	8	1	1	5	5	5	0

Nature of complaints	Number of complaints
Register of Members' Interests (failure to declare in full/failure to complete and return within required 28 days of adoption of the Code of Conduct)	2
Failure to treat others with respect	1
Acted in a manner which brought office/the Council into disrepute	4
Bullying/intimidation of Council officers	2
Combined: brought office into disrepute/improper use of position/prevention of access to information to which a person entitled by law	1
General inappropriate behaviour (relating to actions at a meeting of the Council's Planning Committee)	5

Note:

- ¹ - The statistics detailed cover the period since the introduction of local assessment in May 2008 to 8th May 2009 (date of preparation of this report).
- ² - In 1 case the Monitoring Officer's discretion under Regulation 16(1)(a)(ii) of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 was used to refer the matter back to the Assessment Sub-Committee for reconsideration.

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Bringing

2009 Annual

1

Event programme

What's on at the Assembly?

The Standards Board has worked with a panel of monitoring officers and standards committee members to develop this year's programme. It looks in depth at standards in action and gives you the opportunity to share good practice examples and discuss your experiences of managing the practicalities of local assessment.

The Assembly addresses key strategic issues for ethical governance and answers your questions on key areas of the standards framework. It will provide you with the learning and practical resources you need to improve and promote standards and local democracy in your authority.

To find out more about what sessions are on offer, you can download the advance programme in full, or take a look at each day of the advance programme by clicking on the tabs below.

Day 1 - Monday 12 October | Day 2 - Tuesday 13 October

Choosing your breakout sessions

This year there are 21 breakout sessions to choose from. There are also three main plenary sessions which all delegates are encouraged to attend.

The at a glance guide to sessions gives an overview of the sessions available on each day of the Assembly. Please refer to the advance programme for further information on the content of the session and who the session is aimed at.

Feedback from authorities shows that it can be useful to discuss your breakout session choices with colleagues who are also planning to attend. This helps to ensure you do not all attend the same breakout sessions, and your authority gets the benefit of as wide a range of information and training as possible.

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

Mini plenary sessions include information from expert speakers and an opportunity for questions and answers. Most of these sessions have a maximum attendance of 100.

Workshops and discussion forums take place in smaller halls, with a maximum attendance of 80. These sessions take a practical approach to topics. They give delegates the chance to get hands-on experience, for example by working through case examples.

Q & A sessions take place in smaller halls, with a maximum attendance of 100. They provide an open house for delegates to put questions to a panel of experienced standards committee members and officers, as well as Standards Board staff.

Fringe events are optional. They are run by a range of organisations from the local government family. Click here for further information on fringe events at this year's conference.

Updates on the programme, including information on confirmed speakers, will be added to the site over the coming months, so keep checking back.

What else is happening?

Delegate feedback shows that networking is a key feature of the conference; so once again, there will be many opportunities to share experiences with colleagues, including a conference dinner and dedicated networking areas.

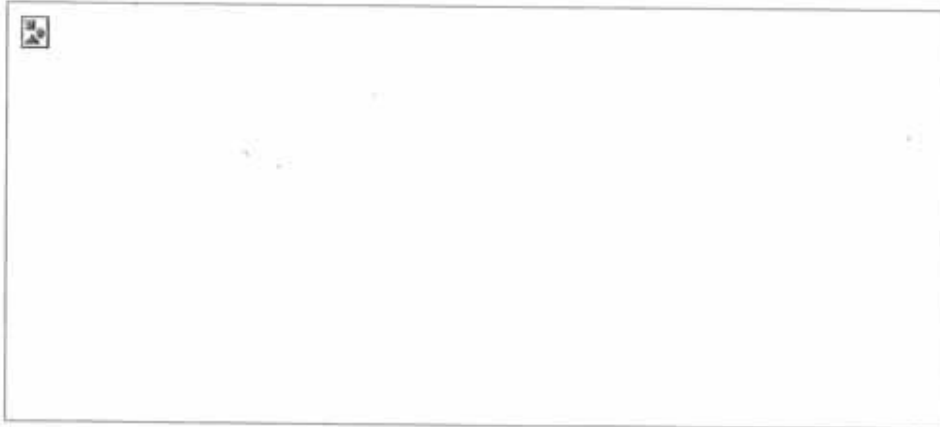
Book now!

This is the most important event of the year for all those working with the Code of Conduct, and demand for places is high. Book online now to ensure you are not disappointed.

If you require a printed copy of the advance programme, please call our event managers, Benedict Business Resources on 01483 205 432.

It may be necessary, for reasons beyond our control, to change the content or timing of the programme, speakers or venue.

The Standards Board for England, Fourth Floor, Griffin House, 40 Lever Street, Manchester, M1
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Bringing

2009 Annual

1

Sessions at a glance

Day 1 - Monday 12 October | Day 2 - Tuesday 13 October

Day 1

Monday 12 October 2009

	09.15- 09.45	10.00- 11.00	12.00- 13.30	14.30- 15.30	16.15- 17.45
Mini plenary Focus on the essentials	•				
Plenary State of the nation		•			
Workshop Practical advice for single purpose authorities			•		
Workshop Other action: Examples and results			•		
Workshop The highly effective standards committee			•		
Workshop Understanding pre-determination and bias			•		
Discussion forum Local assessment: Sharing lessons learnt (monitoring officers)			•		
Discussion forum Local assessment: Sharing lessons learnt (standards committees)			•		
Mini plenary Understanding political parties			•		
Mini plenary Engaging leaders and embedding standards			•		
Plenary The big debate				•	
Workshop Town and parish councils: Capacity building, peer mentoring and compacts					•

Workshop Managing investigations with confidence	•
Workshop Focus on determinations, sanctions and appeals	•
Workshop Putting the public in the picture	•
Workshop Supporting planning and licensing committees	•
Workshop Focus on Code changes	•
Mini plenary Effective joint working: Protocols and practice	•
Mini plenary Standards and partnerships	•

Top

Day 2

Tuesday 13 October 2009

	09.15- 10.30	11.15- 12.15	13.30- 15.00	15.15- 16.45
Workshop Train the trainer	•			
Discussion forums Sharing good practice (choose from a monitoring officer or a standards committee session)	•			
Plenary On the brink: Coming back from ethical collapse		•		
Workshop Other action: Examples and results			•	
Workshop The highly effective standards committee			•	
Workshop Local standards live			•	
Discussion forums Local assessment: Sharing lessons learnt (monitoring officers)			•	
Discussion forums Local assessment: Sharing lessons learnt (standards committees)			•	
Mini plenary The parish council toolkit			•	
Mini plenary Working together			•	
Mini plenary Engaging leaders and embedding standards			•	
Workshop Managing investigations with confidence				•
Workshop Focus on determinations, sanctions and appeals				•
Workshop Putting the public in the picture				•
Workshop Supporting planning and licensing committees				•
Workshop Focus on Code changes				•
Mini plenary Joined up regulation				•
Mini plenary Effective joint working: Protocols and practice				•
Mini plenary Standards and partnerships				•

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

20TH MAY 2009

REVIEW OF THE LOCAL ASSESSMENT REGIME

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Local assessment of complaints about members has been in operation for 12 months. The Committee has asked officers to review certain aspects of the process and this report sets out the findings of that review.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the report be noted and that the following decisions be taken:
- 2.1.1 whether the assessment criteria at Appendix 1 should be revised;
 - 2.1.2 to decide whether a subject member should be notified of a complaint before assessment;
 - 2.1.3 to decide whether a review hearing should be a re-hearing or a review of the soundness of the decision-making process followed by the Assessment Sub-Committee; and
 - 2.1.4 To decide whether to make any recommendations to Council about the composition of the Standards Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 31 March 2009 the Standards Committee identified a number of areas of the local assessment regime which it considered ought to be reviewed at this stage. Each is set out below.

Publicity to and promotion of the ethical framework and complaints process

- 3.2 It was agreed at the meeting on 31 March 2009 that the fact that members sign up to and adhere to a Code of Conduct and that an ethical framework and standards regime is in place should be more widely publicised. This

should be done in a positive manner to highlight the openness and transparency of the decision making process.

- 3.3 Officers have met with the Council's Customer First Officer to discuss how this might be achieved and a number of ideas were considered. Key to this will be the development of a "brand" for the ethical framework and standards regime including a title which can be readily understood by the public. This "branding" for the ethical framework will then be used in all subsequent publicity, literature, information etc. The Customer First team have agreed to give some thought to this branding and come up with some ideas which will be brought to the Committee for consideration. It is intended that it will portray the positive benefits of the framework in language that is not legalistic.
- 3.4 The Council is in the process of developing a new website which will go live at the end of September. It is intended that the new site will be much easier for the public to use. It will include a new dedicated section promoting the ethical framework, the Code of Conduct, the Register of Interests, the work of the Standards Committee and how to make a complaint about the conduct of a councillor, and this section will be headed with the new branding. The section will be drafted in such a way as to be concise with links to more detailed information or explanations or to documents (such as minutes of meetings, Decision Notices, Register of Interest Forms, the Complaint Form and guidance, the Annual Reports etc) to make it more user-friendly. Again the Customer First team has agreed to assist in ensuring that the wording is in plain English. Officers will be receiving training in June on using the new website and it will be ready to go live at the end of September. A link to this section will be available from the section of the website relating to parish councils, and officers will liaise with parish councils in due course to encourage them to include the link on their own websites. It will be made clear how members of the public can complain about failures in service delivery, maladministration or the conduct of officers and how these differ from complaints about councillors' conduct, with the appropriate links clearly shown.
- 3.5 Officers have also met with both the Customer Services Manager and the Assistant Customer Services Manager at the Customer Service Centre to discuss publicity of the ethical framework and standards regime at the Centre. Both are happy for this to be promoted, including the displaying of a poster, information leaflets, complaint forms, guidance etc. Space for this will, of course, be somewhat limited as the Centre is part of the Worcestershire Hub and therefore also has to utilize its space equally for publicity of County functions. Officers will also be speaking with relevant County Council officers to see whether they wish for details of the County Council Member complaints system (which affects some of the district councillors in their dual capacity) to be highlighted, with a view to having as prominent a position as possible at the Centre for the required publicity to ensure this doesn't end up becoming 'lost' in with the existing information. The public is currently able to access the Council's website (including the

Register of Members' Interests) via a computer terminal at the Centre, with two additional terminals due to be made available once the relocation of the Planning Reception from the Council House to the Customer Services Centre takes place next month. Further to a suggestion from officers, it has been agreed that prior to implementation of the new publicity and the launch of the Council's new website, officers will conduct training sessions for the Customer Services Advisors at the Centre to ensure that they are fully aware of the ethical framework and standards regime and can point the public to the relevant elements of this. Staff at the Centre are not currently familiar with the separate Member complaints system as they have not had cause to use this to date, and have confirmed that their first instinct would be to direct any complaints through the Council's iCasework system; the general customer feedback system in place for issues linked to service delivery. Any complaints about Members logged on iCasework would however still filter through to the appropriate officers and would be actioned in the normal manner. As detailed at paragraph 3.4 above, links to both the iCasework system and Ombudsman complaints will appear alongside the Member complaints system to ensure the public are fully aware of the separate complaint processes.

3.6 It is proposed that 2010 should promote local democracy in the run up to the next local council elections. The ethical framework will be actively promoted and explained throughout this campaign and will receive much greater prominence than in previous years.

3.7 Other means of promoting the ethical framework which will be utilised include:

- Coverage in the Together Bromsgrove publication about the obligations of councillors to adhere to the Code of Conduct;
- Press coverage surrounding the adoption of the new Code of Conduct later this year;
- Press coverage surrounding the independent member vacancies;
- Press coverage surrounding the adoption of the new Code of Conduct which is expected to be published this year; it is expected that this will be published in about June 2009 and therefore it is likely that the Council will be adopting it in about September 2009. This will coincide with the launch of the new website and it is therefore proposed that there should be a high profile press release or series of releases promoting the standards regime; and
- Working with parish councils to promote the framework in parished areas.

- 3.8 Officers have looked carefully at the Complaint Form and Guidance which has been used for the past year. It is acknowledged that both could be set out and written in a simpler, clearer manner and in a more logical order, and officers will set about redrafting these for implementation as soon as the new Code of Conduct has been introduced. Drafts of the form and guidance will be presented to members of the Committee for comments before implementation.
- 3.9 Members are requested simply to note the progress being made; regular updates on progress will be given in future Monitoring Officer Update reports.

Assessment criteria

- 3.10 The current assessment criteria are attached as Appendix 1. This is intended to be a guide for members of an Assessment Sub-Committee when deciding whether a complaint should be investigated rather than a prescriptive decision-making protocol. Members are invited to comment on its usefulness in the assessment process and to suggest any improvements.
- 3.11 Officers are seeking guidance from the Standards Board for England about whether or not it is appropriate for the Sub-Committee to take into account previous or concurrent complaints about a member which may demonstrate that a pattern of behaviour emerges; conflicting advice has been received on this issue in the past and officers are seeking to obtain a definitive response on this point.

Notification of complaint to subject member prior to assessment

- 3.12 The Regulations governing local assessment give the Monitoring Officer the discretion as to whether or not to notify the subject member that a complaint about him or her has been received before it has been assessed. The SBE guidance does not direct or suggest a course of action, but advises that in determining its practice the Standards Committee must consider the implications of s63 of the Local Government Act 2000.
- 3.13 Section 63 LGA prohibits the disclosure of any information obtained by a Monitoring Officer in the course of performing any of his or her functions relating to complaints about members except in specified circumstances. One of the exceptions is that a Monitoring Officer may disclose information received as part of a complaint about a member if doing so will enable a Standards Committee or Sub-Committee to perform any of its functions.
- 3.14 Therefore the Committee needs to decide if notification to the subject member will assist it in enabling it to perform any of its functions (which could include the final determination of the matter). If the Committee decides that it would or could (and this might include the example given at the last meeting of the preservation of necessary evidence), then the SBE guidance goes on to add that the Data Protection Act would apply, therefore prohibiting the disclosure of any information about the complainant or any

other person referred to in the complaint unless one of the exceptions to the Data Protection Act applies.

3.15 Finally, the SBE guidance advises that, if the Committee decides that it does intend to notify the subject member about a complaint before it has been assessed, the only information which can be given is the fact that a complaint has been made, the name of the complainant (subject to Data Protection and any request by the complainant for confidentiality) and the relevant paragraphs of the Code which may have been breached; the notification should state that a written summary of the allegation will only be provided to the subject member once the Assessment Sub-Committee has met to consider the complaint, and the date of this meeting if known. Members might question whether or not it is worth making such a bland notification.

3.16 To date it has been the Committee's practice not to notify the subject member about the complaint until an initial assessment decision has been made. The reasons for this were:

- This reflected the practice formerly adopted by the SBE when it had responsibility for assessment; and
- It removes the risk of the subject member "lobbying" members of the Assessment Sub-Committee or seeking to introduce evidence at the assessment stage.

3.17 At the last meeting, Members expressed the view that it might be helpful to notify the subject member before assessment that a complaint has been received to ensure that essential evidence is preserved. However, in the light of the SBE guidance, it seems that it would not be possible to alert the subject member to the nature of the complaint and therefore the aim of evidence preservation could not be achieved.

3.18 Members are requested to decide whether they wish to continue with the existing practice or whether they wish a notification to be sent to the subject member before assessment.

Decision Notices

3.19 Officers will be reviewing the content and format of all of the template decision notices/letters, which are currently based on Standards Board models. Consideration will also be given to the separate notices required under Regulations 8 and 11 of The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 and any proposals in this regard will be brought back to the Committee for approval.

Review of Assessment Decisions

3.20 To date no requests for reviews of assessment decisions have been received and the Committee has not had to give detailed consideration as to how to conduct a review. However, there are 2 schools of thought as to what constitutes a review of an assessment decision and the Committee is asked to decide which approach it will adopt.

- 3.21 On the one hand, a review can simply be a re-run of the assessment hearing by a different group of members, based on exactly the same information given to the initial Assessment Sub-Committee.
- 3.22 On the other hand, the review can be a consideration of whether or not the Assessment Sub-Committee followed the correct procedures, took relevant considerations into account and discounted irrelevant considerations.
- 3.23 The former is the view of the SBE. However, officers have been advised by specialist solicitors that this is not the correct approach; if the review hearing is effectively an assessment hearing then theoretically it should also be capable of being subject to review. Officers are advised that, notwithstanding the SBE guidance, the second approach is the one which the Council should follow. This is similar to the approach taken on a judicial review, in that the Review Sub-Committee would ensure that the decision making process was sound and that the decision reached was not unreasonable based on the information available, but it would not generally seek to find that the Assessment Sub-Committee should have reached a different conclusion unless it concludes that there has been an irregularity.
- 3.24 Both approaches are valid, and members are requested to consider which they consider to be the most appropriate.
- 3.25 Members should bear in mind that if a review is requested and more information is provided by the complainant at that stage, the correct procedure would be for the original Assessment Sub-Committee to re-assess the complaint with all the new information rather than review the initial decision in the light of the new information.

Parish Councils Publicity and Promotion of the Standards Regime and Complaints Process

- 3.26 It has been identified that the standards regime and the complaints process relating to parish councillors probably needs to be given a higher profile at parish level. It is proposed that officers work with the Parish Forum/WCALC to determine how best to do this; ideally this would tie in with the raising of the profile of the District Council's standards regime around September and parishes would be encouraged to participate. It is therefore suggested that an item is placed on the Parish Forum and/or WCALC agendas for either their June or September meeting (or possibly both) and that officers liaise with the Parish Representatives on the Committee. Members' views and suggestions are sought.

Parish Councils – Notification of Complaints

- 3.27 A recent Town and Parish Standard published by the SBE suggested that principal authorities should work with their parish councils to formulate a process by which it is clear what parish council clerks should do when they receive notification of a complaint about one of their members. If a clear process is agreed by all parishes it would remove any difficulty or

embarrassment a clerk may face publicising a complaint made about one of their members. Again it is suggested that officers work with the Parish Representatives on the Committee with a view to placing an item on the agenda for the Parish Forum and/or WCALC meetings in either June or September.

Composition of the Standards Committee

3.28 During the past year a number of queries have arisen relating to the composition of the Standards Committee, some from within and some from outside the Committee. These are:

- Should the same members be able to sit on both the Assessment Sub-Committee and Final Determination Sub-Committee? Again there are 2 schools of thought; one suggests that the impartiality of members who dealt with the assessment of a complaint based on the evidence of the complainant only might be compromised in the event that they come to sit on the Final Determination Sub-Committee. However, when this issues was considered by this Committee last year it was satisfied that this would not be the case. It has yet to be tested as the Committee has not yet undertaken a final determination of a complaint which it has assessed itself and it might be more appropriate to delay consideration of this issue until the Committee has more experience of this, but the Committee's views are welcomed.
- Should the size of the Committee be increased? This would only be a relevant consideration if the Committee decided that members who sat on the Assessment Sub-Committee would not be able to sit on the Final Determination Sub-Committee and so again it is suggested that this issue is not considered at this stage.
- Should there be a Cabinet member on the Standards Committee? The most recent guidance from the SBE states that the Council should give consideration to this issue. The legislation does not require the Standards Committee to include a member of the Cabinet. However, the SBE recommends that the Council should consider whether it is appropriate to appoint a Cabinet member as, on the one hand, appointing a Cabinet member might show that the Committee is supported and respected by all parts of the Council, but on the other, not having a Cabinet member could reflect a degree of independence from the political leadership of the Council. Members are requested to consider whether or not to make a recommendation to Council to amend the composition of the Committee.
- It has been suggested that the Parish Representatives be required to have been elected as opposed to having been co-opted. For the sake of clarity, the local government legislation treats a member who takes office as a result of an uncontested election as being an elected member. Co-opted members of parish councils are required

to adhere to the same requirements as elected members and have the same obligations as elected members. It may be that the issue to be considered is the selection process for the Parish Representatives; at present the selection is left entirely to the Bromsgrove CALC Committee. By analogy, the Independent Members of the Committee are selected by the Council in accordance with selection criteria prepared by the Standards Committee and perhaps consideration could instead be given to adapting the process by which Parish Representatives are selected. The current Parish Representatives have been appointed until the 2011 election and it would be at that point that any new selection process would be implemented. Members are requested to consider whether any recommendation should be made to Council in this respect.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Local Government Act 2000 introduced primary legislation to enable the implementation of a Members' Code of Conduct, and this was amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 insofar as it related to the application of the Members' Code of Conduct to their private lives. The local assessment regime was introduced by the LGPIHA 2007, and further expanded in the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 which also set out the rules and procedures governing the investigation and determination of complaints.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 This item does not link directly with any Council objectives.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The main risk associated with the details included in this report is:

- *Risk of challenge to Council decisions; and*
- *Risk of complaints about elected members.*

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Risk Register: *Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services*
Key Objective Ref No: 3
Key Objective: *Effective ethical governance*

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	None
Environmental	None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	No
Executive Director - Services	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes

Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Assessment criteria

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CONTACT OFFICER

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Standards Assessment Sub-Committee - Assessment Criteria

Ref: Subject Member:

1	Is the Subject Member a member of the Council or a parish council covered by the Standards Committee?	
2	Was the Subject Member in office at the time of the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct?	
3	Is the Subject Member still a member of the Council, or a member of another authority?	
4	Has the complaint already been the subject of an investigation or other action relating to the Code of Conduct by this or another regulatory authority?	
5	Would the complaint, if proven, be a breach of the Code under which the Subject Member was operating at the time of the alleged misconduct?	
6	Is the complaint about something that happened so long ago that there would be little benefit in taking action now?	
7	Has enough information been submitted to enable the Sub-Committee to reach a decision?	
8	Is the complaint too trivial to warrant further action?	
9	Does the complaint appear to be simply malicious, politically motivated or tit-for-tat?	
10	Does the Sub-Committee consider that the complaint should be referred for investigation?	
11	If the complaint is to be referred for investigation is it appropriate for this to be investigated locally?	
12	Does the Sub-Committee consider that the complaint should be referred for other action?	

Signed: (Chairman)

Dated:

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

20TH MAY 2009

WORK PROGRAMME

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

This report sets out a Work Programme for the Standards Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that, subject to any amendments made to it by the Committee, the Work Programme be approved.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Standards Committee established a Work Programme at its meeting on 7th February 2008.

3.2 A Work Programme is beneficial to the Committee for the following reasons:

- (a) to ensure the Committee is fulfilling its roles and functions in accordance with the Council's Constitution;
- (b) to enable officers to be proactive in supporting the Committee and for the Committee to be equally proactive in introducing change to ensure the Council is an ethical organisation, which promotes and maintains high standards of conduct of elected Members, and is an organisation which relates to the community and improves the service it provides; and
- (c) the rising profile of standards committees and, in particular, the changes brought about by the introduction of the local assessment of complaints of alleged breaches by district and parish councillors of the Code of Conduct, under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

3.3 The Work Programme will appear as a regular item on all Standard Committee agendas.

3.4 Officers will update the Work Programme, as appropriate, in between meetings and any amendments to the Work Programme will be referred to the next meeting of the Committee for approval. Members of the Committee are welcome to contact officers, at any time, with suggested changes.

3.5 The Committee is asked to consider the Work Programme and to comment on this accordingly.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 The Work Programme is linked to the Council's Improvement Objective, Priority - Customer Service.

6.2 A Work Programme will assist in informing Members, officers and the public of the work being undertaken by the Committee in ensuring that the Council is an ethical organisation, which is proactively working towards improvement.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

None

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

None

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None

Governance/Performance Management	A Work Programme will assist the Committee in being proactive in fulfilling its role in ethical governance.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	None
Environmental	None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects)	No
Executive Director (Services)	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

14. APPENDICES

Standards Committee Work Programme.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

[Note: Any items that it is proposed should be removed from the Work Programme are denoted by a strikethrough, with any new additions and/or rescheduled items appearing in bold italics.]

Meeting date	Item(s) for consideration
22nd July 2009	
23rd September 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Ombudsman Complaint Statistics (final report for period ending 31st March 2009 and to include comparison with neighbouring authorities)• Parish Councils' Training Programme - update
11th November 2009	
13th January 2010	
24th March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ombudsman Complaint Statistics (interim update for period ending 31st September 2009)• Review of Council protocols on Member-Officer and Member-Member Relations• Parish Councils' Training Programme - update• Review of the operation of the Standards Committee• Calendar of meetings - 2010/2011
May 2010 (date to be determined)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2009/10• Review of the operation and effectiveness of the Members' Code of Conduct (<i>provisional date dependent on when new Code of Conduct introduced</i>)• Review of Planning Services Code of Practice (<i>provisional date dependent on when 2009 review completed / review outcomes</i>)

Later meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2011 Review of the terms of office of the Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee (<i>review to be completed prior to June 2011</i> <i>CALC nominations to full Council - Min. 125/08 (i) of 29th April 2009 Council refers</i>)
<p>Note: All meetings of the Committee will include regular items such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes of the previous meeting;• Monitoring Officer's Report; and• Parish Councils' Representatives' Report.	

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