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PART 1: COMMUNICATION

The main roles of a standards committee are:

- to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members
- to assist members in observing the Code of Conduct.

Your responses to this section will help us to collect examples of the different ways that standards committees communicate messages about ethical standards, both within the authority and to the wider public.

Annual Report

1) Does the standards committee produce an annual report?

NO. The Standards Committee considered whether to produce an annual report at its meeting of {x date} and resolved not to do so. If yes go to q2. If no go to q4

2) What does the report contain?

- A personal statement by the standards committee chairman
- Information about the members of the standards committee
- The role of the standards committee
- The standards committee terms of reference
- Information about the Code of Conduct
- Statistical information about complaints that have been received
- Information about the length of time taken dealing with complaints
- A summary of complaints which have led to investigation, sanction or other action
- Details about training/events provided
- The forward work plan of the standards committee
- Other (*You will be asked for more details if selected*)

3) How is the standards committee annual report circulated?

Note: If your return is not on the website please forward a copy to us. See the guidance notes for details.

- Sent to all senior officers
- Sent to all members
- Sent to parish/town councils (This is only displayed if your authority is applicable)
- Available on the authority intranet
- Available as a specific item on the authority website (You will be asked for the website address if selected)
- Available in the standards committee papers published on the authority website (You will be asked for the website address if selected)
- Included as a full authority meeting agenda item
- Publicised in local newspaper / press release
- Distributed to households
- Available at authority offices
- Not circulated outside of the standards committee
- Other (*You will be asked for more details if selected*)

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Publicising Complaints

4) How can the public access information about how to make a complaint against a member?

- > Through a 'compliments and complaints' type section of the council website (You will be asked for the website address if selected)
- > Through the standards committee section of the website (You will be asked for the website address if selected)
- Complaints leaflets available from the authority
- Included as part of a council newsletter
- Advertised through parish councils
- Information is not available to the public
- > Other (You will be asked for more details if selected)

The council has a webpage which enables complaints against a member to be submitted.

<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourCouncil/ContactSection/complaintscomplimentscomments.html>

The council has a webpage <http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourCouncil/CouncillorsHome/> which explains the role of councillors and this also links to a webpage

<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourCouncil/CouncillorsHome/Unhappywithcouncillorsbehaviour.html>

5) How can the public access information about the outcome of initial assessment decisions?

- Written summary available for public inspection
- Press release issued for all initial assessment decisions
- Press release issued only if the subject member agrees
- Assessment decisions published on the authority website
- Articles published in the authority newsletter
- > Other (You will be asked for more details if selected)

The public cannot access the outcome of the initial assessment.

6) How can the public access information about the outcome of investigations?

- Hearings are open to the public
- Press release issued for all investigation outcomes
- Press release issued only if the subject member agrees
- Published on the authority website
- Decision notices are available for public inspection
- Articles in the authority newsletter
- Other (You will be asked for more details if selected)

Under our procedure rules a summary of the full written decision will be published on the council's website and in at least one local newspaper.

Where the hearing sub-committee determines that there has not been a breach of the Code of Conduct, providing the subject member agrees, the summary will state that the committee found that the subject member had not failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and will give its reasons for reaching that finding,

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7) Do you have a mechanism in place for measuring the satisfaction of all those involved in allegations of misconduct? For example the member, complainant and witnesses.

YES . If yes go to q8. If no go to q9

8) If yes, please can you describe the process?

There have been very few complaints so far to consider. The Council's monitoring officer however maintains an open door policy for those affected to discuss any issues with her, and is in close dialogue with the whips through regular quarterly meetings where any general issues with the mechanisms can be discussed.

Communicating the role and work of the standards committee and standards generally

9) What does the authority do to promote the work of the standards committee and standards generally to the rest of the authority (i.e. internally)?

- > Dedicated standards committee pages on intranet
- Standards committee has its own newsletter / bulletin
- Standards committee issues briefing notes
- > Articles in employee newsletter / bulletin
- Standards committee independent members **observe** other authority meetings
- Standards committee independent members **contribute** to other authority meetings
(a box will appear to ask for further details about what kind of contribution)
- > Other (you will be asked for more details if selected)

The council has recently improved its web presence, following discussion at the standards committee, with a dedicated webpage which includes a letter to all members and an open letter from the chair. The council operates a member e-bulletin which includes important probity/conduct issues.

10) How can the public access information about your standards committee?

- > Dedicated standards committee section on the authority website (you will be asked for the website address if selected)
- Within 'council and democracy' type section of website (you will be asked for the website address if selected)
- > Ethical standards issues have been included in the local press / media
- > Standards committee minutes, agendas, and reports are available to the public
- Leaflets and/or posters are placed in public buildings
- > Places articles in the authority newsletter / bulletin / other publication
- Standards committee meetings are observed by members of the public
- Information is not available to the public
- Other (you will be asked for more details if selected)

As can be seen from the above list, a variety of media are used to provide public information about the Standards Committee. A particularly interesting example was that

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the Standards Committee recently agreed that all councillors expenses would be published on the Council's website, and this was given exposure in the local press

11) What else does the authority do to promote the work of the standards committee and standards generally to the public and other partners?

The Independent Chair of Standards Committee has been invited to contribute to the Induction Programme for new Councillors to be elected in May 2010

The Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive discuss with major development partners the Standards Committee as those partners will often approach councillors directly.

An explanation of the role of the Standards Committee is included in the Chief Executive induction programme for all new staff joining the authority.

PART 2: INFLUENCE

A key factor in creating a strong ethical framework in authorities is clear ethical leadership from leaders and chief executives, setting the tone for the rest of the organisation.

Your responses to this section will help us to understand how closely your standards committee works with political and officer leadership in the authority, and the ways in which the leadership encourages strong ethical standards.

12) How does the standards committee communicate ethical issues to the senior figures within your authority (for example the Chief Executive and Leader of the Authority, Party Leaders)?

- Formal meetings between standards committee members and senior figures specifically set up to discuss standards
- Informal discussion on particular standards issues
- Senior figure attendance at standards committee meetings
- > Monitoring Officer is a member of or attends Corporate Management Team (or equivalent) meetings
- Executive or senior member has portfolio responsibility for standards
- Chair (or other standards committee member) addresses full authority meeting(s)
- > Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)

Meetings held between the Independent Chair of Standards Committee and Chief Executive specifically set up to discuss standards

13) How do the senior figures in your authority demonstrate strong ethical values?

- > Through a strongly promoted whistle-blowing policy
- > By ensuring there are references to ethics in the authority vision / objectives
- > Demonstrating appropriate behaviours
- Senior figure(s) makes personal commitment to standards in statements to public/employees
- > Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)

By including a number of member related protocols in the constitution

14) Does your authority have a protocol for partnership working that outlines the standards of behaviour expected of all those working in partnership?

NO however one is being worked on

15) What mechanisms does the authority use for dealing with member/officer and/or member/member disputes?

- > Informal discussion/mediation
- > Monitoring Officer mediation
- Chair of standards committee mediation
- > Senior figure mediation (e.g. Chief Executive)

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- Advice from Human Resources department
- Solicitor / legal adviser consulted
- Informal hearing
- No mechanisms other than normal complaints process
- > Other (you will be asked for more details if selected)

All as documented in our Member and Officer Protocol

PART 3: TRAINING AND SUPPORT

A specific function of a standards committee is to train members on The Code of Conduct, or arrange for such training. A standards committee can also arrange training on the local standards framework. Your responses to this section will help us to form a view about what the most common topics and methods of training are so that we can share them with the rest of the standards community.

16) Between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2010, has the authority assessed the training and development needs of authority members in relation to their responsibilities on standards of conduct?

YES If yes, go to q18. If no, go to q17

17) If no, please give your reasons why?

Open question. Go to q19

18) If yes, what needs were identified?

- > Introduction to the Code of Conduct
- > Elements of the Code of Conduct
- > The role and responsibilities of the standards committee
- > Ethical governance/behaviour
- None

19) What training/support was provided during the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010?

- > Introduction to the Code of Conduct
- > Elements of the Code of Conduct
- Role and responsibilities of the standards committee
- > Ethical governance/behaviour
- Other (You will be asked for more details if selected)
- None (go to q25)

20) Who received training/support?

- Standards committee chair
- Independent members
- Other standards committee members
- All authority members
- > Specific authority members with particular needs (e.g. new members, planning committee members)
- Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)

21) What methods were employed to give training/support?

- Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops)

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- External trainer/speaker
- > One on one training
- Joint/regional training event
- Online learning
- Guidance notes/briefing materials
- Standards for England materials
- Ethical governance toolkit
- Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)

22) In which areas of the Code of Conduct has training/support been provided?

(Only displayed if 'elements of the Code of Conduct' is selected at q19)

- > Respect
- > Personal/Prejudicial Interests
- > Use of resources
- > Bullying
- > Disrepute
- Predisposition, Pre-determination and bias
- > Equality
- > Confidentiality
- Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)

23) What other training/support has been provided on areas of an authority member's role or activities they may engage in?

- Chairing skills
- Lobbying
- Predetermination, Predisposition and bias
- Blogging and/or the use of social media
- Electioneering
- Freedom of Information (FOI)
- Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)
- > None

24) In general, how well attending was the training provided?

- > 75% or more of those invited
- 50-75%
- 25-50%
- 0-25%

25) Please give a brief overview of how standards issues are covered in your induction process for new members of the authority?

Open question

All new members are required to attend induction training which includes sections on code of conduct and other probity issues. Members elected in by-elections have one to one training on these issues.

26) In which areas of the role and responsibilities of the standards committee

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has training/support been provided for standards committee members?
Please tick all that apply. (*Only displayed if 'role and responsibilities of the standards committee' is selected at q19*)

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PART 4: INVESTIGATIONS

27) How many investigations have been conducted during the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010?

Enter number

2

If the answer is '0', go to q33 (only if your authority is parished). If you do not have parished you will have completed the questions.

If the answer is '1' or more go to q28

28) Of the investigations completed during the period, for how many have external investigators been used?

NOTE: This includes employees of other authorities

Enter number

1

29) Overall, what was your principle reason for out-sourcing the investigation(s)? (Only appears the number given in question 28 is more than 0)

- Impartiality
- > Lack of staff resources
- > To complete the investigation sooner
- Skills required
- Cost
- Other (you will be asked for more details if selected)

30) What type of external investigator(s) did you use?

- Employee of another authority
- Self-employed investigator
- Private law firm
- Other (you will be asked for more details if selected)

Employee of another authority

31) For the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010, what was the approximate total cost of fees paid to the external investigator(s)?

Open question (for an amount)

£1000

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32) Please provide a brief overview of the processes you have in place to ensure the quality of local investigations.

Open question

All investigations are carried out in accordance with Standards for England guidance and investigating officers have induction in the process. The investigating officer is mentored by another officer to ensure investigation is according to the investigation plan. Following the determination hearing the investigating officer and mentoring officer meet to consider points for action generally.