



NOTICE OF MEETING

Standards Committee

THURSDAY, 2ND JULY, 2009 at 19:30 HRS – CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, LONDON N22

COUNCILLOR MEMBERS: Diakides, Jones, Lister, Santry, Reid, Whyte, Williams and Winskill

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS: Mr J. Batterham, Ms R. Chambers, Mr R. Lovegrove, Ms A. Loyd and Ms C. Sykes

AGENDA

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2009/10**

To elect a Chair and Deputy Chair of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2009-10.
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
3. **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair will consider the admission of any late items of urgent business.
4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

A member with a personal interest in a matter also has a prejudicial interest in that matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgment of the public interest **and** if this interest affects their financial position or the financial position of a person or body as described in paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct **and/or** if it relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to them or any person or body described in paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct.

5. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING (PAGES 1 - 10)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meetings of the Standards Committee held on 23 March 2009.

6. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

7. DETERMINATION HEARINGS

To consider the outcomes of recently held Haringey Council Determination Hearings.

8. ANNUAL RETURN TO THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND (PAGES 11 - 18)

Oral Report of the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer – advising of the Annual return to the Standards Board for England submitted in May 2009.

9. PROTOCOL FOR REPORTS FOR EXTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS (PAGES 19 - 26)

Report of the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer - To advise the Committee of a draft protocol to assist the Standards Committee and its Sub-Committees when considering the investigation of complaints against Members.

10. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09 (PAGES 27 - 38)

Report of the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer - To advise the Committee of the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2008/09, for consideration and endorsement prior to its consideration by Full Council on 20 July 2009.

11. TRAINING AND BRIEFING FOR MEMBERS 2009/10

Oral update by the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer - To consider training and briefing arrangements with regards to Standards Committee for 2009/10.

12. STANDARDS BOARD INTERVENTION, JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEES, AND DISPENSATIONS

Oral report of the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

13. NEW ITEMS OF UNRESTRICTED URGENT BUSINESS

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The following items are likely to be subject of a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as they contain exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972; namely information relating to any individual, and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, and information relating to the business or financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Note by the Head of Local Democracy and Member Services

Item 16 allows for consideration of exempt information (if required) in relation to Item 9 which appears earlier on the agenda.

15. CONSIDERATION OF THE OUTCOME OF TWO INVESTIGATIONS RESULTING FROM THE DETERMINATIONS OF THE STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE (PAGES 39 - 124)

Report of the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer - To advise the Committee of the outcome of investigations in respect of Standards Assessment Sub-Committee complaints referrals :

- i. Complaint SC2/089 - attached
- ii. Complaint SC3/089 – To Follow

16. PROTOCOL FOR REPORTS FOR EXTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS - EXTERNAL PROCUREMENT PROCESS (PAGES 125 - 132)

Report of the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer – Exempt Appendix 2 referred to in the covering report attached at Agenda Item 9.

17. MINUTES (PAGES 133 - 144)

To agree the Minutes of the Standards Committee of 23 March 2009, and to receive the minutes of Standards Assessment Sub-Committees held on 22 December 2008, 3 March & 23 March, 20 April, and 26 May 2009.

18. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS

19. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

22 October 2009

14 January 2010

8 April 2010

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24 June 2009

**UNRESTRICTED MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 23 MARCH 2009**

MEMBERS:	Councillors Diakides*, Lister* Mallett*, Reid*,Santry*, Whyte, Williams* and Winskill*
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INDEPENDENT MEMBERS:	Ms I Francis* (Deputy Chair), , Mr R. Lovegrove*, (Chair) Ms A Loyd* and Ms C. Sykes*.
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Apologies Councillor Whyte (for whom Councillor Gorrie was substituting)

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
STCO41.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor Whyte, for whom Councillor Gorrie was substituting.</p> <p>NOTED</p>
STCO42.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p> <p>NOTED</p>
STCO43.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>NOTED</p>
STCO44.	<p>MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 22 DECEMBER 2008 AND MATTERS ARISING RESOLVED</p> <p>That the unrestricted minutes of the Standards Committee held on 22 December 2009 be agreed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.</p> <p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>STC033 – MINUTES</p> <p>Mr Suddaby advised that in respect of reference to the forms for the public to complete in respect of complaints against Members had as yet not been placed on the web-site. Mr Suddaby apologised for this and assured the Committee that this would be done in the very near future.</p> <p>NOTED</p>

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<p>STCO45.</p>	<p>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Chair advised that although he did not have any official announcements to make he announced to the Committee that this would be Irene Francis – Independent Member – last meeting and that her term of office would cease on 18 May 2009, after 8 years as serving as a Member of the Standards Committee.</p> <p>On behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked Ms Francis for her excellent contribution to the Standards Committee and its sub bodies, and wished Ms Francis well in the future.</p> <p>The sentiments were shared by Members of the Standards Committee present.</p> <p>NOTED</p>
<p>STCO46.</p>	<p>MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT ON REFERRALS RECEIVED FROM THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND</p> <p>The Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer – Mr Suddaby advised the Committee that there had been no referrals from the Standards Board for England.</p> <p>In response to clarification from the Chair as to whether there was a need to have this item appearing on the agenda in future given that it was unlikely that there would be complaints referred from the Standards Board for England Mr Suddaby advised that such referrals would be rare in future and therefore it would be appropriate to report on an 'as and when' basis.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That in future any complaints referred from the Standards Board for England would be reported on an 'as and when' basis, and therefore there would not be a need to have a stated item on agenda.</p>
<p>STCO47.</p>	<p>DETERMINATION HEARINGS</p> <p>The Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer – Mr Suddaby advised that there had been no determination hearings since the previous meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>NOTED</p>
<p>STCO48.</p>	<p>ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE - COMPLAINTS CONSIDERED</p> <p>The Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer – Mr Suddaby advised that there were two complaints proceeding as a result of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee held in December 2008, and progress on one had been delayed due to the need for a change in the Investigator. The investigations also took time due to witness interviews, which he understood were happening in April 2009.</p>

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In response to clarification from the Chair Mr Suddaby advised that a further Sub-Committee had met in early March, and reconvened earlier that evening. As a result, a further complaint would be investigated. Therefore, there were now three complaints for investigation as a result of the deliberations of two Assessment Sub-Committees, and a further Assessment Sub-Committee would also need to be convened to consider a complaint received on 20 March 2009.

Councillor Lister referred to the Councillor who the complaint was about and whether they were informed that a complaint had been received against them.

Mr Suddaby advised that the Councillor concerned was advised of the complaint following its receipt, and also that an Assessment Sub-Committee would take place, and then the date, and outcome in terms of whether the Assessment Sub-Committee had determined that the complaint should be investigated or not.

In response to comments of the Chair and Councillor Gorrie in respect of intimidation of the complainant or witnesses, Mr Suddaby advised that neither the complainant or witnesses, or the Councillor who the complaint was about attended the Assessment Sub-Committee, and in the process of an investigation, such interviews would be conducted sensitively and in private. The Assessment Sub-Committee also meet in private although there would be public notice of the meeting taking place.

Councillor Santry asked what was the timescale for hearing a complaint by the Assessment Sub-Committee. Mr Suddaby advised that the Assessment Sub-Committee was required to convene within 21 working days of the complaint being received, in accordance with the stipulated guidance of the Standards Board for England, and wherever possible this was adhered to. The Council was required to publish quarterly returns and that the Standards Board for England monitored these returns in term of regulation, and if the Council failed to meet the deadline of the 21 day period on a consistent basis then the Standards Board for England could then take action.

(Councillor Diakides arrived at 19.45hrs).

There being no further comments the Chair asked that the Committee note the discussion and advice from the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED

That the discussion and comments expressed in respect of the number of complaints considered by the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee, and the process for consideration be noted.

**STCO49. TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS
2009/2010**

In a succinct introduction of the report the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer – Mr Suddaby referred to the recent report by Grant Thornton on Probity in the Council, which had suggested that a training programme for the Standards Committee should be devised. The concept of the training

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programme was to prepare members of the committee for assessment, review and determination functions and would also need to reflect priorities as dictated by national developments and by local needs. The Committee had at its meeting on 22 December 2008, considered amendments that were likely to be made to the Members Code of Conduct. The resulting code changes would need to be understood and acted upon by the Standards Committee and all Councillors should be briefed upon them.

Mr Suddaby referred to the possible increase in determination hearings given the number of complaints presently under investigation, and another two complaints that were at the assessment stage. Mr Suddaby also referred to the recently appointed independent member, and the likely appointment of two new independent members following the present recruitment process, as well as the possibility of having new elected members of the Committee after the Council AGM in May 2009. Mr Suddaby advised that training was therefore needed to relate to both training in the assessment and review processes of complaints and also in the conducting of determination hearings, together with the changes made to the Code of Conduct.

In addition to the role that the regulations brought into play in respect of the assessment and review functions of the Standards Committees Mr Suddaby advised the Committee of the function of considering claims from staff who wished to have their posts exempted from political restriction. There had been no training to date on this particular function and although it was not expected that this would be a regular feature of Standards Committee business, the training programme should cover this area.

Mr Suddaby also commented that the relationship between bias, pre-determination, and the holding of a personal interest had been the subject of much comment and legal argument in the recent period. Mr Suddaby referred to the need to ensure clarity about the separate tests and that appreciating the relevance of these concepts in any particular situation was something that the Standards Committee should become familiar with, particularly in view of the role members must play as chairs and panel members at determination hearings.

With regard to the Council's Planning Committee Mr Suddaby advised that these functions always would have the potential to excite controversy, often bringing to the fore strong community feelings and the Committee may feel that training on the separate roles of the Council in such situations and in particular upon the regulatory function would provide members with helpful background against which to understand and reach conclusions about complaints raised in this area. Similarly, training in the area of licensing regulations would also be of benefit given the 'quasi-judicial' nature of hearings and the requirement of those appointed members to sit in an un-predetermined manner when considering such applications.

Mr Suddaby also advised that the Standards Board for England (SBE) had asked Standards Committees to look into whether additional guidance could be provided to Members regarding the need to ensure that a person advising a member in a professional capacity over whether it is in the public interest to disclose confidential information, was committed to keeping the information

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confidential. Due to other concerns that the Committee have had around the case in question which had led to the SBE's suggestions, this had not been actioned. Mr Suddaby advised that there may be a more general point to be considered about the awareness and understanding of all members about the code of conduct provisions over confidential information, and suggested that this could form the basis together with bias and determination for a briefing for all members.

Mr Suddaby concluded that in addition to formulating and presenting proposals for training activity as suggested, the Standards Committee should consider whether it wished to identify more clearly the training it would expect a member of the Committee to undertake on first taking up their seat on the body, before they take part in an assessment/review sub committee, and before they take part in a determination hearing.

The Chair thanked Mr Suddaby for his introduction and asked if there were any questions from Members.

Councillor Winskill, in welcoming the proposals for training and development, referred to the issue of planning training and commented that this should also centre on bias and predetermination, and that this issue had been raised during an Assessment Sub-Committee where Independent Members had expressed their need to have understanding of planning legislation and an understanding of predetermination and bias.

In sharing the sentiments of Councillor Winskill, Councillor Reid commented that he felt it was also appropriate to have training on Licensing as similar issues occurred in terms of predetermination and bias, and the functions of such Committees and the members sitting in a quasi-judicial mode.

In response Mr Suddaby welcomed the views expressed and stated that the main issue for Members of Standards Committee was the need to understand the issue of bias, and of both personal and prejudicial interests, and how these were related but different concepts.

Councillor Diakides referred to the issue of bias and predetermination, and that Members of the Standards Committee may find it rather intimidating in considering issues such as this without prior understanding or training. Also, in terms of the programme of training, this was a huge commitment and that he was of the view that he may have some considerable difficulty in terms of time commitment.

The Chair, in sharing the view of Councillor Diakides in terms of time commitment felt that there needed to be some prioritisation of the proposed training programme.

In response Mr Suddaby commented that the issues of planning, predetermination and bias were not extensive and therefore could be covered in a training session prior to all future Standards Committees with a particular issue being covered at each, and then some separate training sessions for particular issues that would require a more extensive session. The Standards Committee would also be able to convene a special Standards Committee

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meeting to centre on one particular aspect of the training programme such as planning and licensing issues, and also to have training during a scheduled future meeting.

Ms Sykes commented that she was aware that Councillors had received a training session in terms of planning and felt that she had a considerable knowledge gap in this respect therefore it would be of use to have this, and thought that other Independent member would too, and that early summer would be an opportune time given the likely recruitment of 2 new independent members.

Councillor Lister asked for clarification in terms of whether the Members Code of Conduct was fundamentally different from the rules governing the conduct of Members in a quasi-judicial setting. Mr Suddaby responded that there were two issues for consideration, the issue of bias and predetermination by Members prior to a Planning Committee, and in their conduct at the Committee and the issue of personal and prejudicial interest as defined by the Code of Conduct.

In conclusion, the Chair asked that Mr Suddaby draw up a priority list based on the resolution below.

The Chair then summarised and it was:

RESOLVED

- i. that officers be authorised to prepare a schedule of training activities to take place in the new municipal year 2009/10 as prioritised below, with a programme of suggested dates for each activity:
 - a. Briefing to members of SC on amendments made to the Code of Conduct (as and when amendments are published)
 - b. Briefing to all members (at political group meetings) on amendments made to the Code of Conduct (as and when amendments are published).
 - c. Training for new and existing members of the Standards Committee on the assessment and review of complaints processes and in addition for new independent members on the Code of Conduct (to take place within a month of the Council AGM in May) & training for all members of the Standards Committee on determination hearings (June)
 - d. Training for all members of the Standards Committee on the law relating to bias and pre-determination in a local authority context (at a special meeting of the Standards Committee to be held before the Summer break)
 - e. Training for all members of the Standards Committee on the authority's planning and licensing functions. (Training open to all members of the Council on the two issues of bias and pre-determination and confidential information (Autumn 2009) and consideration of what roles if any individual members of the committee would wish to play in running this training.
 - f. Training for all members of the Standards Committee on their

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	<p>functions in determining applications for posts to be exempted from political restriction (at Committee meeting in Autumn).</p> <p>ii. that in respect of the minimum training requirements for individual Committee members prior to their participation at each stage of the assessment, review and determination stage of complaints, that Members attend and complete the training prior to participation as detailed in (i) (c) above.</p>
<p>STCO50.</p>	<p>RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE</p> <p>In a brief introduction of the report the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer – Mr Suddaby reminded Members that in accordance with the decision of the Standards Committee of 21 October 2008 to commence the process for the recruitment of an independent member of the Committee, and the further decision of the Committee on 22 December 2008 to increase the Independent Membership of the Standards Committee by one, which was confirmed by Full Council on 19 January 2009, in accordance with those decisions an advertisement was placed in the Journal series newspapers published the week beginning March 2nd 2009, together with an advertisement also running in the March edition of Haringey People. The advertisement had also been displayed on the Council website.</p> <p>The Clerk to the Committee – Mr Hart advised that 27 application packs had been requested during the advertisement period by both email and telephone request, and following the closing date for applications on Friday 20th March 2009, 17 had been received and a further two received the morning of 23 March.</p> <p>Mr Hart advised the Committee that as outlined in the report it was now necessary for the Committee to establish an Appointment Sub-Committee to conduct the recruitment shortlisting and interview. The Appointments Sub-Committee Members, appointed by the Standards Committee this evening would then be asked to agree one date for shortlisting and one date for interviews. The Appointment Sub-Committee Membership would comprise of two Independent Members and two Councillors with the Chair of the Sub-Committee having the casting vote.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any points of clarification, or nominations for the membership of the Appointment Sub-Committee.</p> <p>Councillor Lister nominated Councillor Santry as one of the Councillor members, and Councillor Williams nominated Councillor Winskill as the other Councillor Member on the Appointments Sub-Committee.</p> <p>The Chair nominated both Irene Francis and Annabel Loyd as the two Independent Members to sit on the Appointments Sub-Committee.</p> <p>The Chair then summarised and it was:</p>

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	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>that an Appointments Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee be established to shortlist and interview applicants to the two Independent Member vacancies on the Standards Committee; that the membership of the Appointments Sub-Committee comprise of 2 Independent Members, and 2 Councillor Members of the Standards Committee; and</p> <p>that the Membership of the Appointments Sub-Committee be as follows:</p> <p>Ms Irene Frances – Independent Member Ms Annabel Loyd – Independent Member</p> <p>Councillor Liz Santry – Councillor Representative Councillor David Winskill – Councillor Representative</p>
STCO51.	<p>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</p> <p>The Clerk to the Committee advised that this was the last meeting of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2008/09. The calendar of meetings for the Municipal Year 2009/10 was currently being finalised and that Members of the Standards Committee would be notified when after the calendar had been confirmed.</p> <p>NOTED</p>
STCO52.	<p>NEW ITEMS OF UNRESTRICTED URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no items of unrestricted business.</p> <p>NOTED</p>
STCO53.	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the press and public be excluded the from the meeting for consideration of Item 14 as it contains exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985); paras 1 & 2; namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p> <p>SUMMARY OF EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES</p>
STCO54.	<p>EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 22 DECEMBER 2008 AND MATTERS ARISING</p>

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	AGREED THE EXEMPT MINUTES WITH AMENDMENT TO TEXT, AND ISSUE OF MATTER ARISING NOTED
STCO55.	NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of exempt urgent business. NOTED There being no further business to discuss the meeting ended at 20.27hrs.

ROGER LOVEGROVE

Chair

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Annual return

Annual return submitted successfully

Thank you for completing your annual return. We may contact you by email or telephone if we have any questions about the information you have provided.

For more information about what the Standards Board will do with your annual return information please click **[here](#)**.

Your information was submitted to the Standards Board successfully on 15/05/2009 at 17:37.

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Friday 15 May 2009



Confidence in local democracy

Annual return

Summary

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[Independent overview](#)

Does the standards committee have Terms of Reference?

Yes

What help do members receive on following the Code of Conduct?

Help for Members of following the Code Members are offered training sessions on the Code of Conduct. Members are able to obtain advice in individual cases from the Monitoring Officer and his staff. There are regular reminders printed on Committee agendas about the nature of interests they should declare at meetings. There are regular (annual?) reminders to Members to update their entries in the Register of Interests.

Does the standards committee have a forward work plan?

No

Is the standards committee given a role in reviewing amendments to the Authority's Constitution (or Standing Orders where appropriate)?

Yes

If yes, when was the last review undertaken and what was the standards committee's role in the review? Please explain below.

The Standards Committee's terms of reference (at para (g)) include advising the Council on codes and protocols forming the Council's ethical framework and its governance arrangements. But there is no automatic involvement in every aspect of constitutional amendment.

Standards committee meetings.

Please use the table below to indicate how many times between 01/04/2008 and 31/03/2009 the standards committee has met and for what reasons.

Reason for meeting	Number of times met between 01/04/2008 and 31/03/2009
General meeting of whole standards committee	4
Training	3
Assessment sub-committee	5
Review sub-committee	0
Consideration meeting	0
Hearing	0
Other	0



Standards committee - annual report

Does the standards committee produce an annual report on its own work?

Yes

Is the annual report received by a meeting of the full authority?

Yes

Is the annual report sent to all members?

Yes

Is the annual report sent to all senior officers?

Yes

How is the annual report publicised to the general public?

The Annual report is available in the agenda and reports for the Council's Full Council meeting each July. These agendas are available on the Council's Website. Public copies of the Full Council meeting are available in all libraries. The Annual report is also available on the Council's website for Standards Committee.



Standards committee - promoting standards

What else does the standards committee do to communicate the role of the standards committee and the importance of high standards internally within the authority to members and officers?

There is a section on the Council's Website dedicated to Standards Committee. The website publicises information on the role of Standards Cttee, ethical conduct and the standard of conduct expected by elected Members and Officers, and also information detailing how the public can submit a complaint about a Member. Also the Council's electronic register of interests and Corporate Code of Governance are available on this website. Any documents or procedures adopted by the Standards Cttee will be posted on this part of the website.

What else has the standards committee done to promote confidence in local democracy to the wider public?

There is a section on the Council's Website dedicated to Standards Committee. The website publicises information on the role of Standards Cttee, ethical conduct and the standard of conduct expected by elected Members and Officers, and also information detailing how the public can submit a complaint about a Member. Also the Council's electronic register of interests and Corporate Code of Governance are available on this website. Any documents or procedures adopted by the Standards Cttee will be posted on this part of the website.

Has the authority, or the standards committee in particular, considered how it will monitor and ensure high standards of behaviour when the authority is working in partnership with other organisations?

Yes

Please provide examples.

The Council has set up a Partnership Working Group which has promoted amendments to the terms of reference of the Haringey Local Strategic Partnership (HSP) and its subordinate bodies to ensure proper standards of behaviour by Councillors and others on these bodies.



Standards committee - training

Between 01/04/2008 and 31/03/2009, has the authority assessed the training and development needs of members in relation to their responsibilities on standards of conduct?

Yes

What training needs were identified?

Briefing to Chief Executives Board members and Cabinet on new assessment and review responsibilities. Training to Standards Committee on assessments and reviews and mock determination hearing training.

Please provide a list of training and development opportunities that have been provided to members and officers in the period from 01/04/2008 and 31/03/2009, that are relevant to ensuring high standards. Your list should include any training that relates to the operation of the local standards framework, e.g. local assessment, hearings etc.

Local Filter and Assessment training was provided for Standards Committee Members on 06/05/08, 18/06/08 and 03/07/08. This included examples drawn from the revised Code of Conduct.



Leadership

How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the chief executive to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009)?

None

Please also provide an overview of what the meetings were about.

How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the leader of the council to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009)?

None

Please also provide an overview of what the meetings were about.

How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the other party group leaders to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009)?

None

Please also provide an overview of what the meetings were about.

Does the standards committee, or its chair, have regular access to the monitoring officer? How regular?

Yes, when necessary.

How many times in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009) has the standards committee chair been invited to address a full authority meeting?

One

Does the monitoring officer sit on the Corporate Management Team, or equivalent?

Yes

Has an executive member (or senior member where appropriate) been given portfolio responsibility for standards?

No



Complaints

Can the public access information, from the authority website, about how to make a complaint against a member?

Yes

What else has the authority done to advertise the complaint process on member conduct to the general public?

Press release in local papers

Has the authority sought feedback from any of those people involved in an allegation of member misconduct about their satisfaction with the member conduct complaint process (for example the complainant, witnesses or person against whom the allegation was made)? Please choose from responses below.

No, have not sought feedback

How does the authority communicate the outcome of investigations into member conduct to:

a) members

No special means apart from required publication, also mentioned in annual report

b) officers

No special means apart from required publication, also mentioned in annual report.

c) the general public

No special means apart from required publication, also mentioned in annual report.

How does the authority communicate the outcome of allegations into member conduct which have NOT resulted in an investigation (for example those allegations which have not been referred for investigation and those allegations which have resulted in other action) to:

a) members

Only in annual report

b) officers

Only in annual report

c) the general public

Only in annual report



Member officer relations

Does the authority have a protocol for relations between members and officers?

Yes

How is the protocol communicated to officers and members?

There is a Protocol for Member/Officer Relations in the Constitution at Part 5 Section B. The Protocol is accessible to all on the Council's internal and external websites and there is a section about it in the Members' Handbook.

What is the mechanism for reviewing the effectiveness of this protocol?

The Protocol is part of the Constitution and subject to review as with all of the Constitution. A review of the Protocol is proposed once there is fresh Government Guidance on the Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity and possible further guidance on the use of Council resources for political purposes.

Does the authority include training on the importance of high standards of behaviour in the inductions of new members and officers?

Yes

Does the authority have informal mechanisms for dealing with member/officer and member/member disputes?

Yes

Please provide details of any mechanisms and, if possible, provide an example where this has been used.

The Protocol encourages the use of informal means to deal with disputes between Members and officers but does not specify what these should be other than suggesting that the Member raises the matter with the officer's Director (or with the Chief Executive in case of a complaint against a Director).



Registering member interests

Is the member register of interests accessible to the public on the authority website?

Yes

Is the register of gifts and hospitality available to the public on the authority website?

Yes

What does the authority do to signal to members the importance of declaring interests and completing the register of interests and the register of gifts and hospitality?

There is an annual reminder to all Members to update their entry on the registers of interests and regular reminders on each Committee agenda about the need to declare interests at meetings.



Officer conduct

Does the authority have a code of conduct for senior officers?

No

Does the authority compile a register of senior officers' interests?

Yes

If yes, is the register of senior officers' interests available to the public on the authority website?

The Council has a register of officers' interests and senior officers are obliged to declare personal interests (defined in the same way as Members' personal interests under the Code of Conduct) when it comes to the officer's knowledge that he/she has such an interest in a contract or other matter due to be considered by a Member body.

Does the authority compile a register of senior officers' gifts and hospitality?

Yes

If yes, is the senior officers' register of gifts and hospitality available to the public on the authority website?

No



Optional questions

The following questions are optional; you do not have to complete them if you do not wish to. However, this information would be useful to us in helping us to raise ethical standards.

On what issues, if any, would you appreciate more support or guidance on from the Standards Board for England?

The Standards Board for England, the Improvement and Development Agency and the Audit Commission have developed a toolkit that authorities can use to assess the ethical governance arrangements in their authority, and also to identify improvements.

Has your authority used the ethical governance toolkit?

Yes



The Standards Board for England © 2008



Haringey Council

Agenda item:

[No.]**Standards Committee****On 2 July 2009**Report Title: **Investigation of complaints against Members**

Forward Plan reference number :

Report of: **Monitoring Officer**Wards(s) affected: **All**Report for: **Non – Keydecision****1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To present a draft protocol to assist the Standards Committee and its sub committees when considering the investigation of complaints against Members
- 1.2 To consider what arrangements to put in place to enable the efficient and cost effective investigation of complaints against Members.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member**3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 Members of the Standards Committee are asked to consider the attached protocol which provides guidelines to assist their decision making in relation to the investigation of complaints.
- 3.2 That the Committee considers whether it wishes to express an interest in the arrangements that Brent Council is proposing for the procurement via a framework agreement of a panel of external investigators or to ask the Monitoring Officer to look at alternative ways of providing for this.

Report Authorised by: **Monitoring Officer**Contact Officer: **John Suddaby – Monitoring Officer**

4. Director of Finance Comments

4.1

5. Head of Legal Services Comments

The proposed protocol follows closely the relevant legislation and Standards Board for England guidance. It is suggested in the paper submitted by Brent Council that the setting up of any framework agreement would be undertaken by Brent and be in accordance with Brent contract procedures.

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

6.1 The proposal from the Monitoring Officer of L. B. Brent, attached as appendix 2 to this report, is to be treated as "exempt", and not for public disclosure, within categories 3 and 7A of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains "information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons" and "information subject to an obligation of confidentiality".

7. Report

- 7.1 There are limited circumstances in which a Standards Committee sub-committee can direct that an investigation is carried out by a Monitoring Officer of another authority. These are restricted to where the person subject to the complaint has ceased to be a Member, or co-opted Member, of Haringey Council and has become a Member, or co-opted Member, of another local authority. In these circumstances the MO of the other local authority would have full responsibility for the investigation and would report his/her findings to the Standards Committee of the other local authority.
- 7.2 Where these circumstances do not apply, there may still be other circumstances where a sub-committee having decided that the Monitoring Officer of this authority should conduct an investigation into a complaint, feels that it is more appropriate that this is done by an external independent investigator, than by the Monitoring Officer or by a member of his staff.
- 7.3 The attached protocol gives guidance on the considerations to be born in mind by Standards Committee members when taking decisions on commissioning investigations including external investigations.
- 7.4 Where a sub-committee decides that it would be more appropriate that an investigation by the Monitoring Officer is actually carried out by an external investigator then the draft protocol suggests that the cost to the authority is a consideration that it must bear in mind among other considerations.
- 7.5 Because of the increasing numbers of cases, resultant investigations and growing use of external investigators, the cost to authorities has become a concern and the Monitoring Officer has received a proposal from the Monitoring Officer of Brent in conjunction with four other London local authorities for the setting up of a

framework agreement comprising a small group of excellent investigators offering competitive rates. The proposal indicates that the suggested approach would have the potential to deliver savings in the cost of external investigations.

- 7.6 Brent Council is proposing that it undertakes the procurement via a framework agreement and that the cost of this process estimated at £9,000 will be funded from a grant that is being sought from Capital Ambition. Failing this it is suggested that participating authorities would be asked to contribute a proportion of the cost. If the Committee is interested in exploring this proposal further, it would not at this stage be making any kind of commitment to funding without a subsequent report.

8 Recommendations

8.1 Members of the Standards Committee are asked to consider the attached protocol which provides guidelines to assist their decision making in relation to the investigation of complaints.

8.2 That the Committee considers whether it wishes to express an interest in the arrangements that Brent Council is proposing for the procurement via a framework agreement of a panel of external investigators or to ask the Monitoring Officer to look at alternative ways of providing for this.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. It is understood that in the event that a contribution is requested to defray Brent's procurement costs, this would only arise if grant funding was not available and if the Standards Committee had agreed in a subsequent report to be part of the project at which point the measure of potential costs would be available to members of the Committee.

9.2 There are ongoing financial implications for the funding of investigations whether carried out internally or externally and these are currently met by the Legal Services budget.

10 Legal Implications

10.1 Please see Head of Legal comments.

11 Equalities Implications

11.1 There are no equalities implications

12 Appendices to this report

12.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Protocol for the Assessment Sub-Committees

12.2 Appendix 2 – Proposal from Monitoring Officer of L.B. Brent on conducting ethical standards investigations.

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Appendix 1

DRAFT PROTOCOL FOR THE ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE HARINGEY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. This Protocol is for the guidance of each Assessment Sub-Committee (ASC) in Haringey when it makes an initial assessment of a complaint that a Member, or co-opted Member, of Haringey Council has contravened the Members' Code of Conduct (the Code). The Protocol reflects the legislation, the Guidance from the Standards Board for England (SBE) and the decisions of Haringey's own Standards Committee.
2. Under the legislation the ASC has 3 options when making its initial assessment of a complaint. These are:
 - (a) to take no action, or
 - (b) to refer the complaint to Haringey's Monitoring Officer (MO), or
 - (c) to refer the complaint to the SBE.
3. When the complaint, if proved, would not amount to a breach of the Code then a decision to take no action would be appropriate. It may be also be the proper decision if the breach is merely technical or trivial without moral fault on the part of the Member subject to the complaint. The ASC will take into account whether the complaint appears to be politically motivated and whether there is an element of "tit-for-tat" or fault on the part of the complainant.
4. A complainant who is dissatisfied with a decision to take "no action" can request a review of that decision by notice in writing within 30 days from the date the decision was notified to the complainant. The complaint will then be considered afresh by a Review Sub-Committee which will have the same options as the ASC.
5. There is Guidance from the SBE on the factors that would justify referral of the complaint to the SBE. These are:
 - (a) the status of the Member(s) subject to the complaint would make it difficult for the Standards Committee to deal with the matter locally. For example, there may be a serious complaint about the Leader or a Cabinet Member, or

- (b) the status of the complainant would make it difficult for the Standards Committee to deal with the matter locally, or
 - (c) there is a conflict of interest affecting so many Members of the Standards Committee that it could not monitor the investigation properly, or
 - (d) the case is so serious and/or complex that it could not be handled locally, or
 - (e) the investigation of the complaint would require substantial amounts of evidence beyond that available from Haringey Council's own documents or from Haringey's Members and officers, or
 - (f) circumstances where there was substantial governance dysfunction within the Council or the Standards Committee, or
 - (g) the complaint relates to long-term or systemic Member/officer bullying which could more effectively be investigated outside the Council, or
 - (h) the complaint raises significant and/or unresolved legal issues on which a national ruling would be helpful, or
 - (i) there could be a public perception that the Council corporately had an interest in the outcome of the complaint. For example, if the complaint was linked to a judicial review or other challenge to a significant corporate decision, or
 - (j) there are other exceptional circumstances which would prevent the Council or the Standards Committee from investigating the complaint competently, fairly or in a reasonable period of time.
6. Any of the above factors, or any combination of them, may justify a referral of the complaint to the SBE for investigation by an Ethical Standards Officer (ESO). The SBE might decide to refer the case back to Haringey's Standards Committee if it considered that the matter should be handled locally.
7. In other situations, falling between the options of "no action" and "reference to the SBE", the ASC will refer the complaint to

Haringey's MO. Where this happens there are two further options as follows:

- (a) to ask the MO to conduct an investigation into the complaint, or
 - (b) to ask the MO to take "other action"
8. The ASC should only agree "other action" within paragraph 7 (b) after consulting the MO about its practicability and, if advised, securing the written agreement of those involved. The "other action" can be:
- (a) arranging for the Member subject to the complaint to attend training, or
 - (b) arranging for that Member and the complainant to engage in a process of conciliation, or
 - (c) other steps that appear appropriate to the ASC but excluding an investigation of the complaint.
9. It is only possible for a complaint to be referred to the MO of another local authority for investigation if the person subject to the complaint has ceased to be a Member, or co-opted Member, of Haringey Council and has become a Member, or co-opted Member, of another local authority. In these circumstances the MO of the other local authority would have full responsibility for the investigation and would report his/her findings to the Standards Committee of the other local authority.
10. There may be circumstances where a complaint is referred to Haringey's MO but the ASC consider that the investigation itself should be conducted by an external investigator having a substantial degree of independence. Although Haringey's MO would retain formal responsibility for reporting the finding to the Standards Committee, the actual task of conducting the investigation would be delegated to the external investigator. This would include determining the scope and provenance of the evidence needed and the formulation of the eventual finding which will either be a finding of failure to comply with the Code or a finding of no failure.
11. The external investigator will be a suitably experienced officer of another local authority or another suitably experienced person.

12. The circumstances in which it may be appropriate to use an external investigator, as described in paragraph 10 above, are as follows:
- (a) a situation within paragraph 5 (d) and/or (e) above where an external investigator would be useful to assist with a serious or complex complaint, or one involving a substantial amount of evidence, but these factors are not present to the extent that a reference to the SBE would be justified, or
 - (b) a situation within paragraph 5 (i) above where the involvement of Haringey's MO or his/her staff in the corporate decision-making linked to the complaint makes it desirable to have an independent investigation and finding but the matter is not of such gravity that a reference to the SBE would be justified
13. Whenever the ASC is considering whether a complaint should be investigated, Members will take into account whether the matter is of sufficient importance to warrant the spending of significant public money, staff time and the use of other public resources on that investigation. This will apply whether the investigation is proposed to be conducted by Haringey's MO, an external investigator, another local authority's MO or the SBE.
14. When making any decision mentioned in this Protocol, and particularly decisions under paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12 and 13 above, the ASC will have regard to the advice of the MO and those of his/her staff present to advise Members.



Agenda item:

[No.]**STANDARDS COMMITTEE****On 2 JULY 2009**

Report Title. Annual Report from the Standards Committee : 2008 / 09

Report of Standards Committee

Signed : **Mr Roger Lovegrove, Chair of the Standards Committee and Mr John Suddaby, Monitoring Officer, London Borough of Haringey**

Contact Officer : **Clifford Hart, Committees Manager**Telephone: **020 8489 2920** E-mail: clifford.hart@haringey.gov.ukWards(s) affected: **n/a**Report for: **non key decision****1. Purpose of the report**

1.1 To report on the activities of Standards Committee over the previous year and to give information on the monitoring of the Members' Code of Conduct and of complaints against members.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member – n/a

<p>3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:</p> <p>3.1. This report is part of ensuring good ethical governance of the authority and complements the Council's Code of Governance and Annual Governance Statement.</p>
<p>4. Recommendations</p> <p>4.1 That the enclosed Annual Report be noted, and endorsed for consideration by Full Council on 20 July 2009.</p>
<p>5. Reason for recommendation(s)</p> <p>5.1. The Committee is required to consider and endorse the Annual Report for 2008/09 prior to its consideration by Full Council on 20 July 2009.</p>
<p>6. Other options considered</p> <p>6.1. n/a</p>
<p>7. Summary</p> <p>New Local Filter Arrangements brought in</p> <p>7.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and related Regulations made amendments to the previous system for dealing with complaints that Councillors and co-opted members have breached the Members' Code of Conduct. The main change was introduced and became effective in May 2008, and changes to the Council's Constitution to reflect these changes were agreed by Full Council in July 2008. The changes required local Standards Committees to receive, assess, review and determine complaints in place of the Standards Board for England (SBE).</p> <p>7.2 The new arrangements were reported to the Standards Committee at its meeting on 13 June and agreed, and adopted by Full Council on 14 July 2008.</p> <p>7.3 The Council's Standards Committee has set up two new sub-committees to</p>

discharge their new functions. The Assessment Sub-Committee decides if there is sufficient evidence to refer a complaint to the Monitoring Officer for investigation or in the most serious cases to the SBE. If the decision is to take no action, an aggrieved complainant can request a review to be undertaken by a Review Sub-Committee with a different membership. Where a hearing into a complaint is necessary this will be undertaken by a Hearing Sub-Committee in accordance with existing procedures.

7.4 These Sub-Committees comprise members of the Standards Committee selected in rotation so far as is practicable. There will always be at least one elected Councillor but the Chair must be an independent member under the Regulations.

7.5 Since the membership of the Sub-Committees is not fixed but selected in rotation, power has been delegated to the Head of Local Democracy and Member Services to appoint the membership for meeting in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer, detailed in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers (Appendix E, Part F.7, Section 9, paragraph 1.4 of the Constitution).

7.6 Granting exemptions from political restriction to Council posts

The amendments to the legislation also gave local Standards Committees a new role, replacing the national adjudicator, in granting exemptions to officers at or above SCP 44 whose grade would otherwise place their posts within the list of those politically restricted. If a post below Deputy Chief Officer level does not require the officer to give regular advice to Member bodies/Committees or to speak regularly to the media as a Council representative, then the Standards Committee will be able, on the officer's application, to grant an exemption from political restrictions. Any person can ask the Standards Committee to consider whether to direct the inclusion of any post within the politically restricted list applying the criteria above.

8. Chief Financial Officer Comments

8.1 The report is noted and there are no specific financial implications

9. Head of Legal Services Comments

9.1. The legal implications are contained in the main report

10. Head of Procurement Comments –[Required for Procurement Committee]

10.1. n/a

11. Equalities &Community Cohesion Comments

11.1. [click here to type]

12. Consultation

12.1. [click here to type]

13. Service Financial Comments

13.1. [click here to type]

14. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs

14.1. Attached annual report

15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

15.1. n/a

15.2. [Also list reasons for exemption or confidentiality (if applicable)]

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 2008/09
COUNCIL 20 JULY 2008**

1. Introduction

This item reports on the activities of Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2008/09 and gives information on the monitoring of the Members' Code of Conduct and of complaints against Members.

Standards Committees for all Authorities have been and are going through a period of major change due to the implementation of the 2007LGA and the publication of a new Model Code of Conduct which Haringey -in common with other Authorities- has adopted, unamended, as its own Code.

The Register of Interests is available for all to view both in hard copy and on the Council's website. Individual declarations made at meetings are also able to be viewed on-line as part of meetings' minutes. The Opt-In option has continued to be applied to the online version of the Register Of Interests as with the old Register Of Financial Interests.

Independent Members

The Committee welcomes the appointment of Rachel Chambers & Jonathan Batterham as a new independent members, who were appointed in April 2009, and confirmed on May 18 2009 at the Council's AGM. The Committee organised the recruitment to the positions and was able to select both from a large, high-quality pool of applicants. The vacancies have arisen as a result of (i) the increase in Independent Membership of the Standards Committee, as agreed by the Committee on 22 December 2008 and confirmed by Full Council on 19 January 2009, and (ii) the period of office of one of the existing Independent Members (Irene Francis) coming to an end on 18 May 2009. Ms Francis served on the Committee for an initial period of 2 year, extended for a further period until May 2009. The current Chair's (Mr Roger Lovegrove) period of office was further extended by 1 further year by Full Council on 18 May 2009 in order to allow for continuity, and to bring wealth of knowledge and expertise to the Committee given from serving for 3 years to date, which would assist the development of the 2 newly appointed Members.

The Standards Committee continues to work for the improvement of ethical standards in the Council in Haringey, and we look forward to another successful year ahead. We recognise that we would not be able to carry out our work without the support of Officers, whom we would like to thank.

Roger Lovegrove
Chair, Standards Committee
July 2009

Signatories to the Members' Code of Conduct

At the end of the reporting year all 57 Councillors had signed accepting the Code of Conduct, as had all independent Members of the Standards Committee.

There were also 2 Co-Opted Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Of these, both had signed.

Details of the Standards Committee

3.1 Political Breakdown

At the start of the reporting period, Standards Committee consisted of

4 Labour Councillors; 4 Liberal Democrat Councillors; 4 Independent Members

3.2 Changes in Membership

The committee welcomed four new Members at the beginning of the Municipal Year, Councillors Diakides, Mallett, Reid and Whyte, replacing Councillors Edge, Egan and Kober. We then welcomed Councillor Santry in early January 2009 who replaced Cllr Khan.

Following the increase in the Membership of the Independent Members of the Standards Committee by the Committee in December 2008, and confirmed by Full Council in January 2009, a recruitment process was commenced in February 2009 and the 2 vacancies were appointed to in April 2009 and confirmed by Full Council in May 2009, therefore the new appointed independent membership would be effective for the Municipal Year 2009/10.

3.3 Chair and Deputy Chair

Mr R Lovegrove & Ms I Francis and were elected, respectively, as Chair and Deputy Chair for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

3.4 Meetings

Three ordinary meetings and a number of training sessions were held during the year. The Minutes of Meetings held during the year, having been previously circulated, are available, by request, from the Standards Committee Secretary and for inspection in the Members' Rooms, prior to and immediately following the Council Meeting on 20th July 2009.

The Minutes are also available on the authority's website at <http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk> .

3.5 Monitoring Officer

The Committee was pleased to note the permanent appointment of John Suddaby as the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

3.6 New Arrangements and Local Filter

New arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct which became effective from 8 May 2008 gave the Standards Committee the responsibility for assessing, reviewing and determining complaints that a Member has failed to abide by the Code of Conduct. The Standards Board for England would still determine cases in exceptional circumstances and will retain a responsibility for advising Standards Committees and overseeing the effectiveness of the new arrangements.

Training of Standards Committee Members in the new responsibilities took place in early June 2008 and the Assessment Sub-Committee has met on 6 occasions where no action has been taken on 1 complaint and 4 cases have been referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation.

4 Register of Members' Interests (ROI)

The ROI is available for inspection, by appointment within normal working hours, at River Park House.

Additionally, a simplified version of the ROI is included on the Haringey Council website. The simplification consisted of:

- modification of entries by removal of personal contact details;
- an opt-in policy, designed to ensure Members are content that other details, such as employment details, could not lead to violation of their personal privacy.

5 Registration Form for Gifts and Hospitalities

5.1 Summary of Registrations

All signatories to the Members' Code of Conduct are required to register with the Monitoring Officer each Gift or item of Hospitality of value more than £25 received and arising out of their official positions. Registration of items valued at less than £25 was, and still is, voluntary.

Entries registered for items of gifts and hospitality offered during the year are available under each individual Member's Register of Interests. A summary by value of the items registered for the year is given in Table 1.

32 councillors and voting Co-Opted/independent Members registered at least one gift or instance of hospitality during the year.

TABLE 1: Values of gifts and/or hospitality

Value	Number of items registered	
	This Year (2008/09)	Last Year (2007/08)
Less than £25 ¹	3	4
£25-£50 ²	44	45
£50-£100	12	7
£100-£150	7	10
£150-£200	2	0
£200-£300	3	4
£300-£400	0	2
£400-£500	0	1
£500 or more	2	0
Approximate total value^{3,4}	£3,300	£ 4,300
No value declared	0	0
No. of items valued at £25 or more	70	69
Average value⁵ of such items	£47	£62

NOTES to Table 1:

1. The Members' Code of Conduct does not *require* registration of items valued at less than £25. Members may, however, voluntarily register such items if they wish.
2. Where the value of an item was declared by means of a range falling into more than one of the tabulated intervals then it has been included in the higher such interval. For example, if a value had been declared as "£30-£60" then it would have been shown against the interval "£50-£100".
3. For the purpose of enabling an approximate total value to be calculated from this Table, it is necessary to give each interval a representative value. This is the lower end of that interval; for example, the interval "£50-£100" has the representative value of £50. Consequently, items valued at less than £25 are not included in the approximate total value, and items in the range "£500 or more" have been treated as if valued at £500.

4. The final approximate total, shown, has been rounded *up* to the nearest £100.
5. Average value of such items = Approximate total value/No. of items valued at £25 or more.

5.2 Access

The RGH was available for inspection, by appointment within normal working hours, at River Park House. It was also available on the Authority's website.

Under the terms of the 2007LGA and the new Members' Code of Conduct, the RGH has now been combined with the Register of Financial and Other Interests to form the Register of Interests. This means that, on the website, accessibility is affected by the opt-in option; as a consequence, RGH entries for Members who have not opted-in are no longer available online. All entries remain available for inspection at River Park House.

6 Declarations of Interest

The definitions of "personal interest" and "prejudicial interest" are given in the Members' Code of Conduct. A prejudicial interest is a personal interest which either relates to a Council regulatory function or affects the financial interests of the Member or relevant person and which would be perceived as so significant by a member of the public that the Member would be likely to be unable to judge the public interest. Thus all interests as defined by the Code are personal, with some that meet additional criteria being termed prejudicial.

Declaration of Interests is placed as a specific Item on the Agenda of every meeting of the Full Council and of every meeting of every serviced committee.

Council Minutes show there were 30 declarations of personal, non-prejudicial interest at meetings of the full Council during the whole year. There were 2 declarations of prejudicial interest.

7 Complaints about alleged failures to adhere to the Members' Code of Conduct

7.1 Complaints decided during the year

The number of complaints concerning alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct which were decided during the year is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Complaints decided during the year

	This Year	Last Year
Decided by an Ethical Standards Officer	1	0
Decided by the Adjudication Panel for England	0	0
Decided by the Standards Committee	See below	0
No of Complaints received in 2008/09	7	n/a
No of Assessment Sub-Committees held	6	n/a
No of Complaints sent for investigation following Assessment Sub-Committee	4	n/a
No of complaints rejected at Assessment Sub-Committees	2	n/a
No of Review Sub- Committees held	1	n/a
No of Determination hearings held	nil	nil

7.2 Complaints outstanding

As of 18 May 2009 there are 5 complaints being dealt with at various stages of the procedure which had not been finally dealt with.

8 Ethical Governance Training

Ethical Governance training sessions were arranged through the year for all Councillors and independent Members. Attendance at these was increased on previous years, reflecting the importance of understanding the new filter arrangements for considering complaints.

Table 4: Attendance at training sessions for signatories to the Code of Conduct/

Ethical Governance Training	<i>Number of Councillors</i>	Number of independent/ Co-Opted Members
Attended at least one session	40	3

It remains important that Members are aware of Code of Conduct issues as breaches can have significant adverse impact for the Council as well as the individual member. Members are strongly encouraged to attend Ethical Governance training sessions.

Specific training was arranged regarding the new Local Filter for Members of Standards Committee, with Councillors and independent Members attending specific sessions on 18 June (3 Councillors and 1 Independent Member) and 3 July 2008 (3 Councillors and 3 Independent Members).

Training regarding the new Local Filter for All Members of the Council was also carried out via 2 respective political group meetings - on 2 October 2008 (Labour Group – attended by 21 Members) and 4 November 2008 (Lib/Dem Group – attended by 19 Members).

Matters of Concern

Standards Committee did not minute any matters of concern during the year.

Monitoring Officer's Comments

The Monitoring Officer has continued to receive a number of requests from Councillors to advise on whether on interests, on declarations at Council bodies, and on other matters relating to the Code of Conduct.

He welcomes the opportunity to assist Members to comply with the Code of Conduct in this way. He also wishes to thank all Members and officers involved with the Standards Committee for their assistance over the year. In particular he wishes to record appreciation for the commitment of members of the assessment and review

sub committees which have met on a number of occasions in the last year. In the annual return to the Standards Board for England, questions were asked of all Councils which gave some indication of what the SBE would consider good practice in the relations between the Standards Committee and senior Members and Officers of the authority. The Monitoring Officer will raise these issues before the Standards Committee and other relevant bodies for their consideration.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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