

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 2009/10
COUNCIL 19 JULY 2010**

1. Introduction

This item reports on the activities of Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2009/10 and gives information on the monitoring of the Members' Code of Conduct and of complaints against Members.

Standards Committees for all Authorities in 2008/09 had gone 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, un-amended, as its own Code. The 2009/10 year has successfully continued to work with these new arrangements and has had four meetings of its Assessment Sub committee, 1 meeting of its Review Sub-Committee, and 3 Standards Determination Hearing Panels.

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 James Darbyshire & Phillip Skinner as new independent members, who were appointed in March April 2010, and confirmed on May 24 2010 at the Council's AGM. The Committee organised the recruitment to the positions and was able to select both from a 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 14 January 2010 and confirmed by Full Council on 18 January 2010, and (ii) the period of office of one of the existing Independent Members (Roger Lovegrove) coming to an end on 24 May 2010. Mr Lovegrove served on the Committee for a period of 4 years, extended for a further period until May 2010. The previous Chair's (Ms Carol Sykes) period of office was further extended by 1 further year by Full Council on 18 January 2010 from the period 24 May 2010 to 23 May 2011 in order to allow for continuity, and to bring wealth of knowledge and expertise to the Committee given from serving for 4 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.

Carol Sykes
Chair, Standards Committee
June 2010

2. 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, and the 4 Co-opted Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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; 5 Independent Members

3.2 Changes in Membership

Following the increase of 1 Independent Member of the Independent Membership of the Standards Committee as agreed by the Committee on 14 January 2010, and confirmed by Full Council on 19 January 2010 (making a total of 6 Independent Members), a recruitment process was commenced to fill this additional Independent Member position as well as to fill a vacancy that would arise in May 2010 due to the term of office of one the existing independent members ceasing. The vacancies were appointed to in March 2010 and confirmed by Full Council in May 2010, therefore the new appointed independent membership was effective for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

3.3 Chair and Deputy Chair

Ms C Sykes & Ms A Loyd and were elected, respectively, as Chair and Deputy Chair for the Municipal Year 2009/10.

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 Manager and for inspection in the Members' Rooms, prior to and immediately following the Council Meeting on 19th July 2010.

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

3.5 Monitoring Officer

The Committee's Lead officer continues to be John Suddaby. the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

3.6 New arrangements for Local Filter of complaints

New arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct became effective from 8 May 2008 and 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 has continued and took place in early June, and September 2009. The Assessment Sub-Committee has met on 4 occasions where no action has been taken on 3 complaints and 1 case has been referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation. The Review Sub-Committee met on 1 occasion and agreed that no action be taken on the case referred to it.

The Standards Committee – Determination Hearing Panel met on 3 separate occasions to consider the outcome of 3 investigations against the conduct of 3 individual Councillors. 1 hearing panel imposed a 3 month suspension of the subject Councillor concerned, 1 hearing panel censured the subject member concerned, and the other hearing panel took no further action against the subject member concerned.

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;
- allowing Members to opt in or opt out of having their register published on the website.

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 of £25 or more 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.

33 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	
	Last Year (2008/09)	This Year (2009/10)
Less than £25	3	2
£25-£50	44	44
£50-£100	12	11
£100-£150	7	5
£150-£200	2	-
£200-£300	3	1
£300-£400	0	1
£400-£500	0	2
£500 or more	2	1
Approximate total value	£3,300	£3950
No value declared	0	0
No. of items valued at £25 or more	70	65
Average value of such items	£47	£61

NOTE 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. The period of the register is from 18 May 2009 to 24 May 2010.

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	0	1
Decided by the Adjudication Panel for England	0	0
Decided by the Standards Committee	4	5
No of Complaints received in 2009/10	3	3
No of Assessment Sub-Committees held	4	3
No of Complaints sent for investigation following Assessment Sub-Committee	1	4
No of complaints rejected at Assessment Sub-Committees	2	2
No of Review Sub- Committees held	1	n/a
No of Determination hearings held	3	nil

7.2 Complaints outstanding

As of 31 May 2010 there is 1 complaint being dealt with at various stages of the procedure which had not been finally dealt with and a further complaint received which is to be forwarded to an assessment sub-committee..

