

Article 9 – The Standards Committee

9.1 Standards Committee

The Council meeting will establish a Standards Committee.

9.2 Composition

(a) Political Balance

Standards Committees do not have to comply with the political balance rules in section 15 of the 1989 Act.

(b) Membership

The Standards Committee will be composed of:

- Councillors, subject to each registered political group on the Council having an entitlement to at least one seat; and Independent Members (persons who are not a Councillor or an officer of the Council or any other relevant authority as defined in the Local Government Act 2000, who are appointed in accordance with that Act and the Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) Regulations 2001, and who must comprise at least one quarter of the Committee's membership)
- Each political group may nominate substitute members and those Councillors may attend in the place of appointed Councillors provided that they have received training similar to that received by members of the Committee
- No more than one member of the Cabinet; and the Leader may not be a member of the Standards Committee

(c) Independent Members

Independent members will be entitled to vote at meetings;

(d) Chairing the Committee

The Committee will normally be chaired by an independent member. A member of the Cabinet may not chair the Committee. Any sub-committee of the Committee must be chaired by an independent member.

(e) Quorum

The quorum of the Standards Committee shall be three Councillors, and one independent member who must be present throughout the meeting of the Committee. The quorum of any sub-committee of the

Committee shall be three members, including one independent member who must be present throughout the meeting of the sub-committee.

(e) Voting

Decisions by the Standards Committee shall be reached by a simple majority vote but any two Members of the Committee present at the meeting where a decision is taken shall be able to require any matter considered by the Committee to be referred for investigation to the Council's Chief Auditor, the Council's External Auditors, the Audit Commission or the Standards Board for England as appropriate.

(f) Calling of Meetings

Meetings of the Standards Committee may be called by:

- the Chief Executive, or
- the Monitoring Officer, or
- the Leader of the Council, or
- the Chair of the Standards Committee, or
- a petition signed by at least one fifth of the Councillors serving on the Council (ie ten Councillors)

9.3 Role and Function

The general functions of a Standards Committee are to be:

- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the members and co-opted members of the Council, and
- (b) assisting members and co-opted members of the Council to observe the Code of Conduct, and in so doing:
 1. To receive and assess allegations about Council Members involving a breach of the Code of Conduct; and to hear appeals against such assessments.
 2. Subject to the outcome of (1) above:
 - a) to commission the investigation of allegations about the personal conduct of Council Members involving a breach of the Code of Conduct by the Monitoring Officer under the Council's Local Investigation Procedure, and to receive and consider the Monitoring Officer's investigation report; or
 - b) to refer more serious complaints to the Standards Board for England for investigation by an Ethical Standards Officer (ESO);

- c) to ask the Monitoring Officer to take steps other than carrying out an investigation under Section 13 of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008;
 - d) To decide to take no further action.
3. Subject to the outcome of (2) above, to hear and determine allegations about the personal conduct of Council Members involving a breach of the Code of Conduct under the Council's local determination procedure or, where appropriate, to refer such allegations to the Standards Board for England for determination.
 4. To determine allegations of breaches of the Council's local codes of practice which have been investigated by the Monitoring Officer under the Council's Local Investigation Procedure, in particular the Planning code of conduct and the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations.
 5. To deal with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, following the determination of an allegation about the personal conduct of a Council Member involving a breach of the Code of Conduct by the National Adjudication Panel for England.
 6. To monitor the probity and propriety of all aspects of Council business.
 7. To scrutinise the conduct of individual Councillors, political groups and informal grouping, and to issue reprimands to individual Councillors or groups of Councillors in circumstances where breaches of the law, codes of practice or other conduct considered inappropriate have been established.
 8. To advise the Council on the adoption or amendment of national and local codes of conduct and to monitor their effectiveness.
 9. To make recommendations to the Council on any matters or issues relating to probity, propriety and general conduct where the Panel considers it appropriate to do so in the interests of maintaining the highest standards in the carrying out of the Council's functions.
 10. To refer any matter considered by the Committee for investigation by the Council's Chief Auditor (or other appropriate officer), the Council's external auditors, the Audit Commission or the Standards Board for England as it sees appropriate; the Committee may also refer any such matter to the relevant Political Group(s) for their consideration.

11. To advise, train or arrange to train Councillors, co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct and local codes of conduct;
12. To grant dispensations to Councillors, co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Standards Committee will also consider any other matters as the Council refers to it from time to time.