
Meeting: Standards Committee
Date: May 2010
Subject: Annual Report in respect of Governance Issues for the Municipal Year 2009/10
Report of: Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Summary: To receive the Annual Report on Standards activities during the year.

Contact Officer: Barbara Morris, Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All Wards
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Financial:

None

Legal:

To ensure compliance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 and Part 10 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Risk Management:

None

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None

Equalities/Human Rights:

Standards and Ethics inter relate with these areas and all issues are considered and taken into account as relevant.

Community Safety:

None

Sustainability:

Promoting ethical standards amongst the community

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. that the Committee note the Annual Report and endorse its contents.**
- 2. that the Committee agree that the annual work plan as set out in Appendix A paragraph 6 to the report.**

1. Members will find attached at Appendix 'A' to this report a summary of the work carried out in respect of Ethical and Corporate Governance matters during the Municipal Year 2009/10. Members' attention is particularly drawn to the issues reported to Standards Committee and the training that has been delivered.
2. Members will recall that a work plan for the Municipal Year 2009/10 was developed. This Plan included training on Outside Bodies, Equalities and the Code of Conduct for Town and Parish Councils. All were delivered. In addition, a review of the Code of Conduct is expected later this year.
3. Members are also requested to consider the need for a Work Plan for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Annual Report of Work Covered

Background Papers:

None

Location of papers:

N/A

Appendix 'A'

Annual Report of Standards Committee Work Covered for the Municipal Year 2009/10

Work Carried out by Standards Committee

July 2009

- Standards Bulletins Nos. 43 and 44
- Invitation to Join the Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England
- Update on Current Standards Matters
- The Standards Committee (further provisions)(England) Regulations 2009
- Review of Gift and Hospitality Code
- Review of Officer/Member Protocol
- Bringing Standards into Focus – Standards Board Conference 12 – 13 October 2009
- Exempt – Report of an Investigation under Section 59 of the Local Government Act 2000 by an Ethical Standards Officer into an allegation concerning a former member of Bedfordshire County Council and South Bedfordshire District Council.

November 2009

- Appointment of Town and Parish Members to the Central Bedfordshire Council's Standards Committee
- Notification of Gifts & Hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Members
- Standards Committee Article to be placed in Central Bedfordshire Council News Central Magazine
- Development of a Slogan for Standards – "Standards Matter"
- Review of Outside Bodies
- Update on Current Standards Matters
- Standards Bulletins No 45
- Bringing Standards into focus – Standards for England Assembly 12 – 13 October 2009
- Standards training for Central Bedfordshire Council and Town & Parish Members
- 'Assessment made Clear'.

February 2010

- Presentation from the Chief Executive
- Verbal report from Independent Members' attendance at Committees and Town & Parish Meetings.
- Gift & Hospitality Audit
- Notifications of Gifts & Hospitality declared by Central Bedfordshire Members
- Update on Current Standards Matters
- Standard Board Bulletin No 46
- Guidance Notes issued by Standards for England
- Changes to the Adjudication Panel for England
- Planning Code Review

1. Information about Code of Conduct

The Member Code of Conduct has not been amended as expected since 2007. A review of the Code is expected later this year.

2. Statistical information about complaints received 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

All Initial assessments and reviews have been carried out within the prescribed 20 days period.

Initial Assessments Hearings

No further action – 7

For investigation – 8 (5 still under investigation and 1 Hearing scheduled for 30 April 2010)

Other Action – 1 (referred back from Standards for England) – letter of apology

Reviews Hearings

No further action -1

For investigation – 1

Other action -1

3. Information about length of time taken dealing with investigating complaints

Investigations have been carried out predominantly by an external investigator due to resourcing issues. They are taking approximately 3 months. The recommended time scale is within 6 months of an investigation being required.

4. Set out below is a summary of complaints which have led to investigation, sanction or other action

Investigation 1

- Using position improperly
- Failure to declare a prejudicial interest

Resulted in training

Investigation 2

- Bring office or authority into disrepute
- Using position improperly
- Failure to disclose personal /prejudicial interest at meeting

No further action

Investigation 3

- Failing to treat people with respect
- Bullying
- Bringing office into disrepute

No further action

Investigations currently being investigated:-

- Failing to treat people with respect
- Bullying any person
- Bringing your office into disrepute
- Improper use of his position

- Failing to treat people with respect
- Bullying any person
- Bringing your office into disrepute

- Accountability
- Openness
- Respect for others

- Bringing your office into disrepute

- Failing to treat others with respect
- Bullying and harassment
- Bringing your office into disrepute
- Failing to have regard to Code of Conduct

5. List of training delivered this year:-

16 June 2009 – Members How the Authority Operates

29 June 2009 – Members Code of Conduct

01 July 2009 – Members Standards Committee and Hearings

14 July 2009 – Town & Parish Council Code of Conduct

20 July 2009 – Town & Parish Council Code of Conduct

27 July 2009 – Town & Parish Council Code of Conduct

25 March 2010 – Town & Parish Council Equalities

27 April 2010 – Town & Parish Council Interests

6. It is suggested that a forward work plan for the Standards Committee 2010/11 could include the following:-

Delivery of Training

- Code of Conduct following review of code
- Any training identified by Beds T&PC Association for issues relating to Standards

Codes

- Review of Code of Conduct as appropriate

Annual Report

- Annual Report April 2011