

Standards Committee

Agenda

Date: Monday, 18th May, 2009
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach
CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests in any item on the agenda

3. **Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos.11 and 35 a total period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the Committee on any matter relevant to the work of the Committee.

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned where there are a number of speakers.

Note: In order for officers to undertake any background research it would be helpful if questions were submitted at least one working day before the meeting.

4. **Minutes of Previous meeting (Pages 1 - 4)**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2009.

Please contact Carol Jones on 01270 529952
E-Mail: carol.jones@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies or requests for further information or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

5. **Publicity Working Group** (Pages 5 - 10)

5.1 **Minutes of Meetings of the Publicity Working Group held on 10th March and 28th April 2009 respectively**

5.2 **Complaints Procedure**

The Publicity Working Group is in the process of developing a “user-friendly” leaflet for members of the public. This will identify key issues and provide a simplified explanation of how to make a complaint. The attached will form part of that leaflet and is for Members’ consideration.

6. **North-West Independent Members Forum** (Pages 11 - 12)

To receive a report following a meeting of the North-West Independent Members’ Forum held at Preston on 21st April 2009.

The Committee is asked to endorse the continued representation of independent members on this Forum as an approved duty under the Scheme of Members’ Allowances 2009/2010.

7. **Pilot Compact (Macclesfield Borough Council/Cheshire Association of Local Councils)** (Pages 13 - 20)

To receive a report which was considered by the Macclesfield Standards Committee at its meeting on 16th March 2009.

The report gives details of progress in respect of a Pilot Compact which was developed in partnership with Standards Committees of Chester, Macclesfield and Vale Royal. Its aim was to reflect the working arrangements between the parties and seek to promote best practice in the support of, and engagement with, the Town and Parish Councils in Cheshire.

8. **Training Needs for Members**

The Committee is invited to consider future training needs for both Members of the Standards Committee itself, and elected Members in general.

9. **Terms of Reference - Assessment Sub-Committee and Hearings Sub-Committee**

The Monitoring Officer to report verbally on practical difficulties encountered with the Terms of Reference for both the Assessment Sub-Committee and the Hearings Sub-Committee.

10. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The report relating to the remaining item on the agenda has been withheld from public circulation and deposit pursuant to Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the matters may be determined with the press and public excluded.

The Committee may decide that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

PART 2 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITHOUT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

11. Up-date on Complaints Received under the Code of Conduct (Pages 21 - 22)

To consider the report of the Monitoring Officer which outlines the up-to-date situation in respect of complaints made under the Code of Conduct, which have now transferred to Cheshire East Council.

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Standards Committee**
held on Tuesday, 10th March, 2009 at East Committee Room, Municipal
Buildings, Crewe

PRESENT

Councillor Briers (Chairman)
Councillor Sayer (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Mrs R Bailey, B Dykes, J Goddard, J Hammond, Mrs M Hollins,
Mrs M Martin, M Parsons, Eatough and Edwards

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Councillor Mrs L Smetham and Parish
Councillor Mrs P Barnett.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no Members of the Public present who wished to address the
Committee.

14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday
13 January be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 LOCAL ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee considered a report of the Borough Solicitor on progressing the
Committee's local assessment and review function in relation to allegations of
misconduct and complaints received in relation to the Code of Conduct.

The Committee had decided at its previous meeting to set up an Assessment
Sub- Committee and a Review Sub -Committee. The role of the Assessment
Sub- Committee was to make an initial assessment of an allegation and decided
whether to refer it for further consideration or take no action and the role of the
Review Sub -Committee was to consider requests for a review of a decision of
the Assessment Sub- Committee not to take any further action on an allegation.

The Report proposed that the Committee adopt Assessment Criteria to use to
assess complaints and assist with deciding what action to take, if any. The
adoption and publication of Assessment Criteria would ensure that complainants
could be confident that allegations of misconduct would be taken seriously and
dealt with appropriately while ensuring efficient use of public money and officers'

and Members' time. Draft Assessment Criteria was attached as an Appendix for consideration by the Committee.

If either the Assessment Sub-Committee or Review Sub-Committee decided that an allegation deserved further investigation a report would be commissioned by, or on behalf of, the Monitoring Officer. If the Assessment Sub-Committee, when considering that report, felt the complaint warranted further consideration it was proposed that a separate Hearings Sub-Committee would be established to consider the report in detail or conduct a hearing and then determine any sanctions if a finding of failure to observe the Code of Conduct was made.

The report set out draft Terms of Reference for the Assessment Sub-Committee, Review Sub-Committee and Hearings Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: That

(a) the draft Assessment Criteria set out in Appendix 1 be approved and adopted subject to an amendment to point 2 relating to Timescale to now read "The Sub-Committee will take into account when the events subject to the complaint took place and will not normally investigate or pursue other action if the event occurred more than 12 months prior to the complaint being submitted (except if it decides there are exceptional circumstances)";

(b) a separate Hearings Sub-Committee be established; and

(c) the draft Terms of Reference for the Assessment Sub-Committee, Review Sub-Committee and Hearings Sub-Committee as set out in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 to the report be approved and adopted.

16 POLITICAL RESTRICTIONS - FUNCTIONS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report of the Borough Solicitor on the effect of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 in relation to politically restricted posts.

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 had made provision for certain posts held by local authority officers to be designated as "politically restricted" and required local authorities to maintain a list of such posts. These posts included Statutory Officers and Senior Officers and those who had contact with the media.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act now allocated the role in relation to politically restricted posts to Standards Committee rather than the Secretary of State. This meant that Standards Committee would consider whether a post should be included on the list of politically restricted post as well as determining applications for exemption from political restriction.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and noted.

17 PROMOTING THE WORK OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report of the Working Group that had been set up to discuss ways of promoting the work and function of the Committee.

The Working Group had held its first meeting on 17 February and considered a number of issues:

- How to link promoting the work of the Committee with any regular publication issued by or on behalf of the Council ;
- Producing a leaflet on the role of the Committee and its terms of reference and constitution;
- Making Town and Parish Councils aware of training DVDs on Standards issues.

The Committee agreed it was important to highlight its powerful role, provide clear guidance on how a complaint should be made and ensure that members of the public were clear about the level of independent membership on the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the issues identified by the Working Group be supported and the Group continue to meet to progress promoting the Committee.

18 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND FUTURE MEETING DATES

The Committee was advised that a Calendar of Meetings had been produced and would be submitted to full Council on 2 April for approval.

The Committee was also advised that at the next meeting the work and progress by Macclesfield Borough Council and its recommendations on the Pilot Compact with the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) would be reported.

RESOLVED: That

(a) training issues be considered further at the next meeting; and

(b) a standard item be included on each agenda outlining current progress on any allegations of misconduct and the work of the Sub-Committees.

19 TRAINING DVD

Members of the Committee viewed a training DVD issued by the Standards Board for England on local investigations and hearings.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.35 am

Councillor Briers (Chairman)

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE PUBLICITY SUB-COMMITTEE
(formerly "Working/Discussion Group")
RE: STANDARDS COMMITTEE
held in Crewe on Tuesday 10th March 2009

PRESENT: Nigel Briers (Chair), David Sayer, John Goddard,
Roger Pomlett and Kenneth Edwards (on behalf of Patsy
Barnett from whom apologies were received)

The Sub-Committee met at the conclusion of the meeting of the full Standards Committee convened for 10.00 am during the course of which the Sub-Committee was (a) renamed "Publicity Sub-Committee" and (b) authorised to continue working to promote awareness of the Standards Committee, its purpose and objectives.

PUBLICITY/INFORMATION

Nigel Briers and Roger Pomlett circulated written ideas and suggestions for consideration within the wider discussion which followed and in conclusion emphasised the need to adopt a positive approach summarised under three heads, viz –

- (a) maintaining high standards of conduct, integrity and good governance in local administration;
- (b) close scrutiny at all times of the conduct and efficiency of members both in committee and public life;
- (c) outlining the remedies and procedure should a lapse occur and complaint(s) be lodged

In the course of this discussion, the Sub-Committee stressed the need that while advocating wide circulation of the proposed leaflet and other publicity media, care should be taken to avoid the promotion of a complaints culture. Concern was expressed in relation to delay and the length of time taken to process and resolve complaints, these being matters to be considered further as the work of the Sub-Committee is developed.

PROPOSED LEAFLET

The Sub-Committee now considered the narrower issues of the form and content of the proposed leaflet, the targets and means of distribution, suggested contributors, size and graphic design. In addition, copies of the recently published "Cheshire East News" were submitted and it was AGREED that the Sub-Committee should contribute on a regular basis.

Members expressed a willingness to undertake specific tasks as detailed –

Roger Pomlett would draft a foreword to the leaflet and compile suggestions for the content of an introductory note from an authoritative figure within Cheshire East;

Kenneth Edwards agreed to speak to known contacts with regard to the cover, graphics and design and if possible to secure a “mock up” in time for the next meeting of the sub-Committee (see post);

David Sayer would look at the question of membership and constitution of the Standards Committee and submit a draft of the proposed section dealing with this aspect;

Nigel Briers undertook to prepare a guidance and summary of the procedure for making a complaint and an explanatory note in relation to the sequence of events once a complaint has been lodged;

John Goddard agreed to act as intermediary with a view to arranging a meeting with the Leader of the Council/Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer and representatives of the Sub-Committee within the timescale 25th to 29th May 2009 (it being envisaged that a draft of the proposed leaflet would be available for submission and consideration at such meeting)

NEXT MEETING

In the course of detailed discussion, the need for an editorial meeting of the Sub-Committee became apparent and it was agreed that this would be held at Crewe (East Committee Room) on Tuesday, 28th April 2009 at 10.30 am. Members, in the meantime, would address the several matters under discussion at this meeting with a view to formulating firm and final proposals at such editorial meeting.

**REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE PUBLICITY SUB-COMMITTEE RE:
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
held in Crewe on Tuesday 28th April 2009**

**PRESENT: Nigel Briers (Chair), David Sayer, John Goddard,
Michael Garratt and Patsy Barnett**

The Sub-Committee met by prior arrangement to progress from an editorial standpoint the form and content of the proposed leaflet to be widely distributed for the purpose of promoting a clearer understanding of the constitution and function of the Cheshire East Standards Committee.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Before considering in detail the draft paragraphs now submitted in accordance with the allocated responsibilities as detailed in the report of the sub-committee held on the 10th March 2009 there was discussion with regard to the now firmly arranged meeting with the Leader of the Council involving members of the sub-committee on the 14th May 2009 and on the 6th May 2009 involving the Chairman and Vice Chairman with Chris Chapman Monitoring Officer. In respect of the meeting with the Leader of the Council on the 14th May the Chairman reminded members that this would be at Westfields and any member wishing to attend would be very welcome.

With particular regard to the earlier engagement on the 6th May 2009 the Chairman highlighted a number of specific issues he considered appropriate to be raised with the Monitoring Officer including the constitutional position regarding formal adoption of the Code of Conduct by Cheshire East Council, whistleblowing, training programmes and the form and content of complaint forms. Members present were encouraged to raise supplemental questions which could be considered on the 6th May 2009.

DRAFT PARAGRAPHS

The sub-committee now turned to consider the draft entries for the leaflet submitted by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. The Vice Chairman's contribution entitled 'Makeup of the Standards Committee' prompted constructive discussion and was finally approved with certain amendments. The Chairman submitted a comprehensive summary under the heading 'Making a Complaint' [*Copies of the proposed drafts are enclosed as appendices 'A' and 'B' respectively to this report*] The draft foreword and introductory paragraph was not available but is hoped that this will be forthcoming within the next few days and will be circulated to members of the Sub-Committee.

The Chairman stressed the need for the final draft to be in place before the full Standards Committee meets on the 18th May 2009

28th April 2009

MAKE-UP OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Standards Committee of Cheshire East Council is drawn widely from across the spectrum of the authority. There are eight members who are elected Members and reflect the political constitution of the Council as a whole, along with three Town/Parish Councillors.

Very importantly, and additionally, there are five appointed and non-political independent members selected on merit and experience and these include the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Committee and by this means, the Committee conserves not only independence of thought and deliberation, but also remains distanced from political influence. Further details of the Committee's role and contact details of the individuals appointed to the Committee are available at the Council's website: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

The Code of Conduct is available to, and accessible by, Council members and the general public alike and its principal purpose is to maintain high standards of conduct, integrity and good governance in local administration. If you consider that a Member of Cheshire East Council or a Member of a Town or Parish Council has breached the Code of Conduct for Councillors you should send your complaint in writing, to;

The Monitoring Officer, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ.

You can do this by using the complaint form available from the Monitoring Officer or you may be able to download it from the Council Website (www.cheshireeast.gov.uk). If you make a written complaint you should be aware that the Standards Committee is unlikely to be able to keep your identity confidential.

Before you make a complaint please read the Code of Conduct available on the website or from the Monitoring Officer. You may find more information from the Standards Board for England (www.standardsboard.gov.uk, The Standards Board for England, Fourth Floor, Griffin House, 40 Lever Street, Manchester, M1 1BB).

If you are unhappy with the way a Councillor has behaved you may wish before lodging a formal complaint in writing to discuss the issue in confidence with the Monitoring Officer or his representative. (Chris Chapman, Tel. No. 01270 686637). The Standards Committee wants to ensure that complaints are dealt with as speedily and efficiently as possible. By discussing your complaint, a simple and speedy solution may be found.

If you do make a written complaint you will be told in writing what will happen to it. If the authority decides that the Standards Committee will deal with the complaint, a meeting of three of the Committee Members, chaired by one of the

Independent Members will decide what happens next. This meeting will be called within 20 days of receiving your complaint. The Committee may decide not to take any further action. In this situation you may ask for a review within 30 days of receiving this decision. A Review Committee of three different Members, again chaired by an Independent Member, will look at the complaint again. If either of these Committees decides on further action they may then formally investigate your complaint or in very serious cases send it to the Standards Board for England.

Cheshire East Council Standards Committee exists to help ensure that you have complete confidence in the integrity of your local councillors. If you do have a complaint, the Standards Committee will do all it can to ensure that it is dealt with fairly and effectively.

**REPORT FOLLOWING A MEETING OF THE NORTH WEST
INDEPENDENT MEMBERS FORUM
held at County Hall, Preston on Tuesday 21st April 2009**

THOSE ATTENDING from Cheshire East Standards Committee

Nigel Briers (Chairman)
David Sayer (Vice Chairman)
Roger Pomlett

**CONVENOR: Chris Rice - Lancashire County Council
Standards Committee**

**SECRETARY: Roy Jones - Committee and Standards Manager
Lancashire County Secretariat**

**ALSO PRESENT: 43 Independent Standards Committee
Representatives of Constituent
Authorities**

[It was explained during the course of the meeting that the Forum when inaugurated was designated as 'Greater Manchester' and only in recent times had this been enhanced to include the North West Region hence the inclusion of the Cheshire East Council]

INTRODUCTIONS

The Convenor welcomed delegates from Cheshire East and outlined the format of the meeting and a summary of replies to an earlier questionnaire sent out with the agenda was circulated for the purpose of facilitating a show of hands by delegates at a later stage in the Forum dealing in the main with housekeeping issues e.g. frequency and venue of meetings, duration of office of chair/secretary (see post). The Convenor introduced the guest speaker Freda Sharkey Acting Head of Legal at the Standards Board for England (SBE).

GUEST SPEAKER

Ms Sharkey gave a pragmatic and forthright dissertation on a number of practical issues dealing at the outset with first reactions, procedures and acknowledgement following receipt of a complaint (which complaint must be in writing) and her guidance was particularly helpful in relation to the difficult question of precisely how much detail of the complaint is to be disclosed in the initial stages to the member against whom the complaint is levelled. No detailed information to be disclosed unless and until the Standards Committee (or a Sub Committee thereof) has considered the complaint (behind closed doors). Ms Sharkey reminded delegates that no person can be 'a member' of a Standards Committee unless that person has signed up to the Council's Code of Conduct (a point to watch carefully in relation to Parish Council representatives).

In dealing with complaints useful guidance and timely warnings were given relative to 'Other Options' for disposal with particular reference to 'Other Action' and instances where it may be appropriate to adjourn for additional information. One particular point to note i.e. where the 'OtherAction' option is exercised then the further investigation route is closed and cannot be retrospectively revived. Delegates were reminded to refresh their memories with regard to Regulation 8 (formulating decisions) and Regulation 11 (keeping the subject member informed). The subject of 'Other Action' closed with a short summary of the circumstances in which a complaint may be referred to SBE. Sole and very important criterion i.e. "Is it in the public interest?" An interesting and instructive talk dealing with useful and practical points and throwing up for discussion moot points which may well trigger future debate e.g. reviews. It appears that nationally hardly ever does a review panel reach a different decision than that achieved at initial assessment stage which raises the question "Does it add value"? Food for thought.

Closing remarks touched lightly on such matters as Intervention (by SBE), Joint Committees and issues surrounding the on-going debate concerning what constitutes a 'criminal conviction' and the new Model Code scheduled for publication in June 2009 (thought unlikely).

Questions followed from delegates mainly again on the subject of criminal convictions in relation to cautions and length of time taken up in procedures (Nigel Briers)

CONCLUSION

The third and final part of the Forum dealt with the housekeeping issues previously referred to and Roger Pomlett explained to the meeting that the Cheshire East delegates had not returned the questionnaire by reason that none of them had previously been included in the Forum and accordingly had neither the experience or sufficient knowledge of the inner workings of the Forum to formulate, at this stage, any constructive contribution.

This was wholly accepted and understood by the Convenor and delegates.

[It is understood that further information will be forthcoming from the Secretariat following circulation of all relevant local authorities upon their respective willingness or otherwise to make a funding contribution to the cost of administering the Forum. The independent membership will ensure that Cheshire East Standards Committee is kept informed]

21st April 2009

CHESHIRE EAST STANDARDS COMMITTEE
18TH MAY 2009

PILOT COMPACT

INTRODUCTION

At its meeting in July 2008, the Macclesfield Standards Committee considered a report which gave details of central government funding provided for capacity building initiatives in respect of parish and town councils. This comprised two programmes: (1) A pilot peer-mentoring programme for Parish and Town Councillors, and (2) a pilot to implement a Model Compact between County Associations and Standards Committees of principal authorities. It was this second proposal which Macclesfield Standards Committee agreed to take forward. In the West of the county, Chester City Council and Vale Royal Borough Council took similar steps.

The project was intended to run from August 2008-February 2009 and the outcome of the project would be evaluated by the Standards Board for England.

The report appended below was submitted to the Macclesfield Standards Committee at its meeting held on 16th March 2009. This followed several earlier reports and liaison between the Committee and ChALC (Cheshire Association of Local Councils) to determine the scope of the agreed compact. On 16 March the Standards Committee approved the 13 recommendations proposed by ChALC, but recognising that a decision upon the future of the project would need to be made by Cheshire East, resolved that the recommendations be placed before Cheshire East's Standards Committee. Accordingly the Committee is invited to consider its view on the future of the project.

MACCLESFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2009

**PILOT COMPACT BETWEEN THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND
THE CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (ChALC)**

SPECIFIC WARDS AFFECTED

All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

No

1 DECISION REQUESTED

- 1.1 To note progress on the Pilot Compact.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members considered update reports on 11 September and 11 November on this matter, and has established a sub committee, which has met informally on one occasion, to take it forward.
- 2.2 It was reported in November that a questionnaire had been sent by ChALC to participants from all authorities, following which Jackie Weaver, ChALC's Chief Officer, had considered the responses. That had led to the compilation of documents summarising the responses, and making recommendations for inclusion into the Cheshire Code of Conduct Compact. The documents from ChALC were appended to the report and Standards Committee discussed and formulated detailed responses to the list of 13 recommendations, which were then forwarded to ChALC.
- 2.3 Attached as Appendix One to the report is the latest version of the Compact.
- 2.4 Out of the 13 recommendations put forward by the Standards Committee ChALC accepted all bar the following three -
- (i) Recommendation 1-This should be amended to include representatives of the Executive Committee of the Association as well as the Chief Officer to be included in the circulation list.
 - (ii) Recommendation 12-This should be amended to state that proposals for a mentoring programme be placed on hold for a year.
 - (iii) Recommendation 13-This should be amended to state that the Principal Authority supports the recommendations put forward by ChALC as it sees appropriate.

3 RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED DECISION

No significant risk is identified in respect of any decision which the Committee might reach.

4 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

LGR	-	The work undertaken on Compact can be taken forward once Cheshire East fully takes over standards functions.
Financial	-	None.
Staffing	-	None.
Legal	-	None.
Assets	-	None.
Policy	-	None.
Equality	-	None.
Crime and Disorder	-	None.
Other	-	None.

5 APPENDICES

Appendix One-Code of Conduct Compact for Cheshire Councils.

Monitoring Officer Julie Openshaw Tel Ext No: 4250

The Contact Officer for this report is Julie Openshaw Tel Ext No: 4250

TRACKING/PROCESS:

Consultation	Ward Members	Partners	Standards Committee
			11 September 2008 11 November 2008 19 January 2009 16 March 2009
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following list of documents was used to complete this report and are available for public inspection for four years from the date of the meeting from the Contact Officer named above.

None.

Code of Conduct Compact for CHESHIRE Councils

*Developed in Partnership
with the Standards Committees of
Chester, Macclesfield and Vale Royal*

Background

Using Central Government funding aimed at providing capacity building initiatives for the parish councils, the Standards Committees and Monitoring Officers of Chester City, Macclesfield and Vale Royal and the Cheshire Association of Local Councils worked together to produce a compact to reflect the working arrangements between the parties and seeking to promote best practice in the support of, and engagement with, the Town and Parish Councils in Cheshire. It is envisaged that the lessons learned and the good practice developed will transfer across to the newly created Authorities of Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester in due course. The compact will be shared with other County Associations so they can benefit from the pilot.

Objectives

The key objectives of the compact are:

- 1 To gain improvements in governance at parish council level;*
- 2 To reduce incidence of governance failure and relationship breakdown within parish councils;*
- 3 To improve understanding of the application of the Code of Conduct in parish councils;*
- 4 To establish good practice;*
- 5 To contribute towards the development of new parish councils and confidence in local democracy*

Partners

Throughout the development of the Compact the following organisations and individuals have been supportive and taken part in forming the consultation, development and implementation of the Compact.

NALC	-	Meera Tharmarajah, Head of Legal Services
ChALC	-	Jackie Weaver, Chief Officer
Chester City Council	-	Charles Kerry, Monitoring Officer
		Jack McGarva, Standards Committee
Chairman		Hilary McNae, Standards Committee
Member		
Parishes	-	Upton by Chester Parish Council
		Great Boughton Parish Council
Macclesfield Borough Council	-	Rosemary Lyon, Acting Monitoring Officer
		Ian Clark, Standards Committee Chairman
Parishes		Poynton with Worth Parish Council
		Bollington Town Council

Vale Royal Borough Council

- Margaret Ingram, Acting Monitoring Officer
Frank Thomas, Standards Committee Member

Parishes

- Winsford Town Council
Northwich Town Council

The Agreement

- 1** *To improve the relationship between the Standards Committee and the Cheshire Association, the Chief Officer will be included in the circulation list for Agendas and Minutes of the Standards Committee and will be invited to attend regular Standards Committee meetings no less frequently than twice per year.*
- 2** *To develop the relationship between the Standards Committee and the Town and Parish Councils the Standards Committee will arrange a Parish Conference no less frequently than annually to update the Parish Clerks and Members on the work of the Standards Committee; and*
- 3** *The Chairman of the Standards Committee will be invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils to address the Town and Parish Council Members on matters of concern or interest to the Standards Committee.*
- 4** *The Standards Committee will draft an annual bulletin highlighting issues of interest or concern and circulate it to the Town and Parish Councils through the e-bulletin network of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils. Where appropriate, significant issues/outcomes from the Standards Committee may be circulated in a timely manner.*
- 5** *The Monitoring Officer will write to the Town and Parish Clerks in March/April to remind them of the requirements for newly elected or returned members and to advise them of the support that is provided by the Monitoring Officer and how to access that support. In addition a further letter will be compiled and circulated to Town and Parish Councillors outlining the support offered by the Monitoring Officer to them; and*
- 6** *The Monitoring Officer will copy the ChALC in on such correspondence and signpost ChALC as a means of additional support for those Town and Parish Councils.*
- 7** *The Standards Committee will recognise ChALC as the means by which it will recruit Parish Members and that a protocol for the recruitment of those members will be developed between the Standards Committee and ChALC.*
- 8** *The Standards Committee will catalogue available information in a format that Clerks and Councillors can access directly, either upon request or via a link on the Principal Authority website. This catalogue should include: guidance; case studies; link to the Standards Board website; training opportunities; forms and contact information.*
- 9** *A training programme should be developed in partnership between the Monitoring Officers, ChALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks to address the specific needs of both members and officers in Town and Parish Councils.*
- 10** *A training register should be kept by each Clerk showing the Code of Conduct training that has been accessed by the Clerk and members.*
- 11** *A 'hot-spot' training session should be developed for roll out to any Town or Parish Council experiencing high levels of complaint or where the Standards Committee has identified special need.*

- 12** *A mentoring programme should be developed consisting of knowledgeable Town or Parish Council members and Clerks who are supported in working with Parish Councils to avoid potential complaints.*
- 13** *The Monitoring Officers should seek to encourage the use of budgetary resources to support ChALC in delivering the recommendations contained in the Compact, recognising the important role they play in providing an interface between the Standards Committees and the Town and Parish Councils.*

Document is Restricted

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