

Standards Committee

Agenda

Date:	Monday, 28th March 2011
Time:	2.00 pm
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 top 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.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at the meeting should provide at least three clear working days' notice in writing and should include the question with that notice. This will enable an informed answer to be given. It is not required to give notice of the intention to make use of public speaking provision, however, as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours notice is encouraged.

Please contact
E-Mail:

Carol Jones on 01270 686471
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

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

To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2011.

5. **Issues and Improvements Working Group** (Pages 5 - 14)

To receive a report of the Issues and Improvements Working Group held on 22 February 2011 and to consider any appropriate action.

6. **Cheshire Association of Local Councils**

Jackie Weaver, Chief Officer of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, will be in attendance for discussion of this item.

7. **Annual Report** (Pages 15 - 26)

To note the Annual Report which is to be submitted to full Council.

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

The reports relating to the remaining items on the agenda have 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 items pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 7C of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

PART 2 - MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

9. **Complaints under the Code of Conduct** (Pages 27 - 30)

To consider a report in respect of complaints made under the Code of Conduct.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Standards Committee**
held on Monday, 24th January, 2011 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Mr N Briers (Chairman)
Mr D Sayer (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rhoda Bailey, J Hammond, M Hollins, M Parsons and L Smetham

Independent Members:

Mr I Clark
Mr M Garratt
Mr R Pomlett

Parish Council Representatives:

Mrs P Barnett
Mrs T Eatough
Mr K Edwards

APOLOGIES

Councillors B H Dykes and M A Martin

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

31 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

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

There were no members of the public present on this occasion and the Committee proceeded to its next item of business.

32 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Subject to the inclusion of Mr R Pomlett in the list of apologies received -

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2010 be approved as a correct record.

33 THE FUTURE OF THE STANDARDS REGIME AND THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

On 25 May 2010, the Coalition Government had announced its intention to abolish the Standards regime, in line with the Localism Bill. The report of the Interim Borough Solicitor outlined for Members the applicable sections of the Bill and the potential impact on Cheshire East Borough Council and its Standards Committee.

The Bill had received its second reading in the House of Commons and was due to move on to Committee stage, with Royal Assent (the passing of the Bill into law) not expected until later in the year. The Deputy Monitoring Officer briefly summarised the changes which would be introduced should the Bill be enacted.

As the subsequent report on the agenda also discussed the implications of the Bill, the Chairman proposed that the report be presented to the Committee before opening the matter for debate.

34 CONDUCT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS- CORRESPONDENCE FROM COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CLG)

The second report began with reference to a letter sent to Standards Committees Chairs by Dr Robert Chilton, Chairman of Standards for England following receipt of a letter from the Local Government Minister, Bob Neill MP. The correspondence primarily concerned the repealing of the Standards regime but also outlined the subsequent transitions arrangements which would apply in respect of the complaints procedure.

The Interim Borough Solicitor explained that complaints could be submitted to the authority up to the 'appointed day'; a point approximately two months after the Bill had received Royal Assent. At this time, any cases still with Standards for England would transfer to local Standards Committees, which would remain established until such time as the last complaint had been dealt with.

Comment was made by Members that the Bill was somewhat contradictory in nature due to the imposition of a duty on Councils to maintain high standards of conduct amongst members and co-opted members. This seemed to imply that a form of code would have to be adopted in order for allegations of misconduct to be determined. The Committee also discussed -

- What might happen if Parish Councils chose to adopt a voluntary code but the authority did not and vice versa;
- Whether the current 'relationship' between the parishes and the Standards Committee would be retained or revised;
- What the future role of Independent Committee members might be given that the establishment of a voluntary Standards Committee would

place no requirement on Councils to include independent persons within its membership.

The Interim Borough Solicitor indicated that it was too early in the process to identify all the possible connotations of the legislation and it was hoped that the passage of the Bill through parliament would provide the clarity required.

The Chairman considered that, from comments made at the meeting, there was support amongst members for the adoption of a voluntary Code of Conduct; proposing that a report be submitted to full Council outlining the Committee's views. Having endorsed the proposal, the Committee cautioned that it would be preferable to obtain an agreement 'in principle' from the Leader of the Council prior to commencing work on drawing up a voluntary code and it was suggested that the matter be referred to the Committee's Issues and Improvement Group for consideration.

AGREED: That a meeting of the Issues and Improvement Group be held on Tuesday 22nd February 2011 at 2pm.

35 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

The Chief Officer of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Chalc) had accepted an invitation to attend the Committee's next meeting on Monday 28 March 2011. One of the topics to be covered was the preliminary work Chalc was undertaking with Cheshire West and Chester Council in respect of a voluntary Code of Conduct for the Cheshire Parishes. To enable information to be prepared for the meeting, Members were invited to submit any questions for the Chief Officer to the Vice Chairman for collation.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 2.50 pm

Mr N Briers (Chairman)

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	28 March 2011
Report of:	Monitoring Officer
Subject:	Improvements and Issues Working Group

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report gives an update on the work being undertaken by the “Improvements and Issues” Working Group and invites the Committee to consider proposals for the future following the dismantling of the current Standards regime. The notes of the Group’s meeting held on 22 February 2011 are attached.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is invited to consider the Working Group proposals.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 High standards are a cornerstone of good governance.
- 3.2 The Council has a duty to the community to provide a mechanism for the submission of complaints.
- 3.3 The introduction of an alternative mechanism for submission of complaints against Borough Councillors/Town and Parish Councillors will ensure public confidence in the way in which complaints are handled.
- 3.3 The proposals represent a more streamlined system which is transparent and will also protect Members from vexatious complaints.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 None identified.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None identified.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Localism Bill which is currently progressing through Parliament, and the consequent action outlined in Section 10 below provides the legal background to this issue.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 The development of an alternative voluntary Code of Conduct will strengthen governance arrangements and ensure compliance with the duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for members and co-opted members.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The Improvements and Issues Working Group was set up as an informal group of Members of the Standards Committee in 2009/2010 to address in detail a variety of issues. It has no decision-making powers. The Working Group has reported back to the full Committee with any findings, if appropriate.
- 10.2 At its meeting on 24 January 2011, the Standards Committee considered two reports i) Future of the Standards Regime and Standards Committee; and ii) Conduct of Local Authority Members – Correspondence from CLG, which outlined plans set out in the Localism Bill to dismantle the current local government standards regime. In order to give detailed consideration to the issues raised in the reports, a meeting of the Improvements and Issues Working Group was convened on 22 February 2011.
- 10.3 In addition to the reports referred to above, the Local Government Association (LGA) in association with the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) had issued a short guide for authorities “Maintaining High Ethical Standards in Local Government”. The Guide summarised the Bill’s standards regime proposals and outlined the conduct controls which exist in addition to it.
- 10.4 Much of what has been suggested by the ACSeS was considered by the Working Group which supports the introduction of a Code of Practice, following wide consultation, with a simple, inexpensive democratically-run committee to deal with complaints quickly, transparently and fairly.

10.5 The Working Group's conclusions are given in paragraph 4 of the attached notes and the Committee is invited to consider these.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Julie Openshaw
Designation: Deputy Monitoring Officer
Tel No: 01270 685846
Email: julie.openshaw@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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**Summary of a meeting of the Standards Committee's
Improvements and Issues Working Group
Tuesday, 22nd February 2001 at Sandbach Town Hall**

Present:

Mr Nigel Briers	Standards Committee Chairman
Mr David Sayer	Standards Committee Vice Chairman

Councillors:

Rhoda Bailey, Brian Dykes, John Hammond, Margaret Martin, Mike Parsons and Lesley Smetham

Independent Members:

Mike Garratt, Roger Pomlett

Parish Representatives:

Patricia Barnett, Teresa Eatough

Officers:

Caroline Elwood, Diane Moulson and Julie Openshaw

1. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed the members and outlined the purpose of the meeting which was to discuss –

- i) Whether the Council should adopt a voluntary Code of Conduct and if so, why?
- ii) How would it differ from the existing Code; and
- iii) What recommendation should be placed before the Standards Committee at its next meeting?

Two papers had been provided as a basis for the discussion; a report setting out arguments for and against a voluntary Code of Conduct written by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and an article from the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) on the Localism Bill and the Standards regime. Comments and observations forwarded to the Chairman by Ken Edwards (Parish Representative) who was unable to be present, were tabled at the meeting.

2. WHY RETAIN A CODE OF CONDUCT?

2.1 Reasons

- The Council has a duty to the community to provide a mechanism for the submission of complaints
- It would ensure public confidence in the way in which complaints were dealt with
- It would provide a common framework for Members to work within

- Protection for Members from vexatious complaints and complainants
- Aids transparency in the decision making process
- Has the support of the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council
- Council could be open to criticism if problems arose and there was no mechanism in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct
- There was too wide a gap between having no Code and breaches of the regulations which would constitute a criminal offence

2.2 Conclusions

Cheshire East Council should adopt a voluntary Code of Conduct to -

- i) ensure compliance with the duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for members and co-opted members;
- ii) promote transparency within local government and retain the support of local people; and
- iii) reduce the number of cases which might otherwise result in litigation

3. WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO DIFFERENTLY?

3.1 Structure of the Code/Committee Process

Members agreed with a statement from the Chairman that any new arrangements would need to be inexpensive, quicker to resolve complaints and less bureaucratic than at present whilst being simpler to understand.

3.2 What might the Code/Process look like?

- Nolan Principles could be used as a basis for the Code
- Initial complaint made in writing could come first to Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer
- Group Leaders could be initial arbiters and deal with minor breaches with more serious cases being determined by the Monitoring Officer
- Would there need to be a body to which appeals could be made if alleged breaches were dismissed?
- In the interests of natural justice the process would need to allow for both parties to comment on the allegations and provide evidence. This would preclude a short turn around of complaints but would allow allegations to be resolved much quicker than at present and within a realistic time frame.

3.3 What would be the role of the Committee?

As the Committee would only be called upon to hear complaints it could be brought under the Constitution Committee but Members considered that it would be a retrograde step to combine Standards, the Constitution Committee and the Audit & Governance Committee as suggested in the ACSes report

The sanctions available to the Committee would reduce significantly; the highest penalty being censure. To remain effective, the imposition of a sanction by their peers would need to be deemed as detrimental by Members.

Independent members would only be non-voting advisory members as a voluntary Standards Committee would become an ordinary committee of Council. There was uncertainty whether Councillors would be comfortable with Independent 'outsiders' imposing sanctions upon them but without their involvement, the Council would need to guard against a perception of 'Members looking after their own'.

4. Recommendation to Standards Committee

The Working Group concluded that -

1. A simple coherent carefully written Code of Practice following wide consultation, with a simple inexpensive democratically run committee to deal with complaints quickly, transparently and fairly would seem to be the way forward.
2. The justification for this approach would be to -
 - i) ensure compliance with the duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for members and co-opted members;
 - ii) promote transparency within local government and retain the support of local people; and
 - iii) reduce the number of cases having to be resolved by litigation.
3. The existing Standards Committee could be asked to produce a draft code and draft structure based upon the existing codes and structures but adjusted to take account of new legislation and new principles of localism.

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Standards Committee

Annual Report 2010-2011

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Foreword from the Chairman

It remains the role of the Standards Committee to seek to ensure that the elected representatives sustain the very highest standards of behaviour in their public life. I remain convinced that in terms of selfless public service and ethical conduct the Cheshire East councillors and the town and parish councillors have a great deal to be proud of; however, these standards need to be conscientiously upheld and jealously guarded.

For much of the past year the Committee has become increasingly aware of the Coalition Government's commitment to remove the whole Standards Regime. This was explained in a letter from the Chairman of the Standards for England in November 2010 when he informed Standards Committees nationally that the proposals encompassed not only the abolition of the Standards for England but also the removal of the National Code of Conduct for councillors and the hitherto obligatory requirement to appoint and maintain a Standards Committee. In its place it will be for councils themselves to choose whether or not they wish to have a voluntary local code or a Standards Committee (which would be deemed an 'ordinary committee' of the authority and therefore not need to have independent representation). In addition any standards committee which was formed would not have the power to suspend a member. Regulations, yet to be made under the proposals would create a new criminal offence of failing to register or declare interests.

The Councils within Cheshire East must clearly decide what they wish to do. They may decide not to adopt a Code of Conduct and thus have no Standards Committee at all, relying upon the existing state and judicial machinery to deal with issues. The Cheshire East Standards Committee are looking at the possible future scenario and if requested will produce a report with recommendations to the Full Council and to the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC). The Committee is anxious to maintain liaison and co-operation with ChALC in furtherance of the Compact defined and agreed with ChALC and its Chief Executive during 2009/10. The Chief Executive of ChALC attended the March 2011 meeting of the Standards Committee.

I would like to place on record my thanks to my Vice-Chairman, David Sayer, who continues to play a crucial and central role in the work of the Committee. I would also record my thanks to all the Committee and the Staff who have worked to ensure a successful year for the committee.

The work of the Committee will continue under the current rules until new legislation is enacted. The current assumption is that the Localism Bill will become law in November 2011 and depending upon what complaints are being considered, the Standards Committee in its current form will cease to exist in the early part of 2012.

NIGEL BRIERS

(Independent Chairman Cheshire East Standards Committee)

Members of the Committee

In contrast with other Committees of Cheshire East Council, the Standards Committee has no less than five Independent non-political members who are appointed, and selected on merit and experience and these include the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. This does ensure that the Committee retains independence and free from political influence. The remaining members of the Standards Committee are drawn widely from across the spectrum of the Council and the community and comprise eight elected members who reflect the political constitution of the Council as a whole and three Town/Parish Councillors.

- **Independent Members:**

Nigel Briers (Chairman of the Committee), was a Member (and Chairman) of the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council Standards Committee.

David Sayer (Vice-Chairman of the Committee) was appointed Chairman of the former Congleton Borough Council Standards Committee in 2000 and served for just over 9 years until the inception of Cheshire East Council.

Ian Clark was a Chairman of the former Macclesfield Borough Council Standards Committee.

Michael Garratt served for 5 years as an Independent Member on the Congleton Borough Council Standards Committee.

Roger Pomlett was an Independent Member of the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council Standards Committee for 5 years.

- **Parish Council Members:**

Teresa Eatough served as a Parish Council representative on the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council Standards Committee.

Patsy Barnett served as a Parish Council representative on the former Congleton Borough Council Standards Committee.

Ken Edwards served on Macclesfield Borough Council Standards Committee for a year as a Parish Council representative.

- **Borough Council Members:**

Rhoda Bailey (Conservative).

Brian Dykes (Conservative) was a member of the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council.

John Goddard (Liberal Democrat) was a member of the former Macclesfield Borough Council Standards Committee.

John Hammond (Conservative) served for 5 years as a member of the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council Standards Committee and was Deputy Chairman from 2006 to 2008.

Margaret Hollins (Conservative), was a member of the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council.

Margaret Martin (Labour), was a member of the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council.

Michael Parsons (Independent) was a member of the former Congleton Borough Council.

Lesley Smetham (Conservative) was a Parish Council representative on the former Macclesfield Borough Council Standards Committee for 2 years.

Monitoring Officer

The Interim Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer is Caroline Elwood. The previous Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Chris Chapman, left the Authority in December 2010 to take up a new post in Herefordshire.

The Monitoring Officer has a statutory role in ensuring that the Council, its Members and Officers carry out their functions in a proper and lawful manner.

The Monitoring Officer's duties include the following –

- Maintaining the Register of Members' Interests.
- He has an important role in contributing to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct throughout the organisation.
- Main legal adviser to the Standards Committee and its Sub-Committees.
- Ensuring that decisions of the Standards Committee are implemented.
- If the Standards Committee refers an allegation for investigation, the Monitoring Officer will appoint another Officer to investigate the allegation and, should there be a local determination hearing, will act as the Legal Adviser to the Sub-Committee.
- The Monitoring Officer is also the main point of contact for Standards for England and submits periodic returns on the complaints received and dealt with by the Standards Committee.

4

Introduction to the Standards Committee

The Standards Committee was set up under Article 9 of the Council's Constitution and sets out to discharge the Council's function under Part 111 of the Local Government Act 2000.

ROLE

The main roles of the Standards Committee which apply to all elected and co-opted members of the Local Authority, including Town and Parish Councillors, are:

- To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members
- To assist Members in observing the adopted Codes of Conduct which set out rules governing the behaviour of Councillors
- To investigate allegations that Councillors' behaviour may have fallen short of the required standards.

STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEE

The full Committee has met on five occasions during the 2010-2011 Council year. The Monitoring Officer and/or his deputy are in attendance at these meetings. Members of the public are welcome to attend and some time is allocated at the start of each for people to raise issues connected to the work of the Standards Committee.

In addition to the full Committee meetings, a further three Sub-Committees have been set up in accordance with the guidance from Standards for England which deals with complaints made against Councillors.

- Assessment Sub-Committee:

The role of this Sub-Committee is to receive complaints and make an initial assessment as to whether or not there is a *prima facie* case which warrants further action or investigation.

- Review Sub-Committee:

If the Assessment Sub-Committee has concluded that there is no case to answer, and the complainant is dissatisfied with this outcome, they can request the Review Sub-Committee to review that decision.

This Sub-Committee will assess the complaint afresh and it has the same decision-making powers as the Assessment Sub-Committee, ie (i) refer the complaint for investigation, (ii) refer for other action, (iii) refer to Standards for England, or (iv) decide that no action should be taken.

The Review Sub-Committee cannot comprise the same membership as that of the Assessment Sub-Committee which initially assessed the complaint.

- Hearings Sub-Committee:

Although this Sub-Committee is called the “Hearings” Sub-Committee for ease of reference, it has two distinct roles. It has a “consideration” role and a “determining” role. The “consideration” meeting is separate to the meeting at which a hearing may subsequently need to be conducted to “determine” the complaint.

“Consideration” role

Where a complaint has been referred for investigation, the Monitoring Officer will appoint an Investigating Officer to investigate the complaint. The Sub-Committee, acting in a “consideration” capacity then receives the Investigator’s Report, for the purpose of deciding, based on the facts as set out in the report, whether or not to accept the findings of the Investigator.

If the Investigator’s report concludes that there has been no breach and the Sub-Committee agrees, there is no further action.

However, if a breach has been identified by the Investigator, or the Sub-Committee disagrees with an Investigator’s finding of “no breach”, then it must hold a hearing to consider the matter in full. Not only is this in accordance with the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, but it also ensures that the Rules of Natural Justice are not breached; these are the minimum standards of fair decision-making imposed on persons or bodies acting in a judicial capacity and includes (a) the right to know the case against them; (b) the right to a fair hearing; and (c) the rule against bias, including a perception of bias.

“Determination” role

This will be a separately convened Sub-Committee but it can include the same Members who considered the complaint at “consideration” stage.

At the Hearing, the subject Member and/or their representative, together with the complainant and any witnesses, will have the opportunity to present their case to Members (both orally and in writing).

The Sub-Committee will determine whether or not there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct and if it concludes that there has been a breach, will be able to impose appropriate sanctions.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

During the past Council year there have been four complaints against serving or former Councillors –

- On 24 March 2010, the Assessment Sub-Committee considered a complaint (CEC//10/01) made against a serving Cheshire East Councillor. The Assessment Sub-Committee resolved that action other than an investigation was appropriate. This was carried out by the Monitoring Officer and the outcome of that action was reported to the Sub-Committee on 13 July 2010.
- On 13 July 2010, the Assessment Sub-Committee considered a complaint made against a serving Cheshire East Councillor (CEC/10/02). The Sub-Committee concluded that the Subject Member may have breached the Code of Conduct and referred the matter to the Monitoring Officer for investigation.
- On 13 July 2010, the Assessment Sub-Committee considered a complaint made against seven serving Cheshire East Councillors (CEC/10/03). The Sub-Committee concluded that there was no breach and no further action was justified. The complainant was not satisfied and the matter was referred to the Review Sub-Committee on 26 August 2010. The Sub-Committee concluded that no further action was justified.
- On 13 July 2010, the Assessment Sub-Committee considered a complaint against a Parish Councillor (CEC/10/04). The Sub-Committee concluded that the Subject Member may have breached the Code of Conduct and referred the matter to the Monitoring Officer for investigation.
- On 26 August 2010 the Assessment Sub-Committee considered a complaint against a serving Cheshire East Councillor (CEC/10/05) and concluded that action other than investigation was appropriate. This was carried out by the Monitoring Officer.
- On 9 December 2010 (CEC/10/06) the Assessment Sub-Committee considered a complaint made against a serving Cheshire East Councillor. The Sub-Committee concluded that the Subject Member may have breached the Code of Conduct and referred the matter to Standards for England.
- On 18 March 2011, the Hearings Sub-Committee, in its “consideration” role, considered the reports of Jonathan Goolden, the Investigating Officer who had investigated Complaints CEC/10/02 and CEC/10/04. Both of these had been referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation following consideration by an Assessment Sub-Committee on 13 July 2010 as noted above.

NOTE: The conclusions of the Sub-Committee will be added to the report prior to submission to full Council.

WORKING PARTIES

A Working Party entitled “Issues and Improvements Working Party” was established to consider issues concerning the proposals by the Government to end the Standards Regime.

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

The Annual Assembly of Standards Committees which is usually held in October each year was cancelled in 2010 in light of the Government’s announcement about the future of Standards for England.

TRAINING

The Committee has not undertaken any formal training during the year 2010-2011.

MAKING CONTACT

Information about the Standards Committee including details of meetings, membership and the work of the committee is available from carol.jones@cheshireeast.gov.uk or phone 01270 686471.

If anyone wishes to make a complaint, they are asked to contact the Council's Monitoring Officer at Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ or phone 01270 686637 or e-mail complaints.customerservices@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

Standards for England can provide members of the public with useful information about both the Code of Conduct and the work of Standards Committees.

5. Work Programme

The Standards Committee agreed the following work programme at its meeting held on 24 May 2010.

Month	Item
May 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on Partnerships Protocol • Training requirements (standing item) • Work Programme 2010/2011
July 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct (monthly report on the number and types of complaints which have been referred). • Progress report on Partnerships Protocol • Training requirements (standing item) — to give consideration to the arrangement of training sessions on the Code of Conduct for Borough, Parish and Town Councillors. This will be dependent on Communities and Local Government (CLG) having published the revised Code. • Local Government Ombudsman complaints – these are published at the end of the June
September 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct (monthly report on the number and types of complaints which have been referred). • Training requirements (standing item) • Raising awareness: to review publicity for the role of the Standards Committee. • Review of Register of Interests. Committee to receive a report twice yearly on the outcome of a review of the Register of Interests.
November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct (monthly report on the number and types of complaints which have been referred). • Training requirements (standing item) • Feedback from the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees • Promoting high standards of ethical behaviour – the role of political groups
January 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct (monthly report on the number and types of complaints which have been referred). • Training requirements (standing item) • Chairman's Annual Report for confirmation before submission to full Council

Month	Item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town and Parish Councils: Feedback from the annual conference (Autumn 2010) in respect of any Code of Conduct issues raised by Clerks or Chairmen. • Annual Review of Whistle-blowing Procedure and “Dignity at Work” policy
March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct (monthly report on the number and types of complaints which have been referred). Finalised Chairman’s Annual Report 2010/2011 • Training requirements (standing item) • Finalise Work Programme 2011-2012/2010 • Review of Register of Interests. Committee to receive a report twice yearly on the outcome of a review of the Register of Interests.
May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct (monthly report on the number and types of complaints which have been referred). • Training requirements (standing item)

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