

Report of: Head of Law and Governance
To: Standards Committee
Date: 5 March 2010 **Item No:** 6
Title of Report: End of Year Report May 2009 – April 2010

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To enable the Committee to consider and approve the draft End of Year Report May 2009 – April 2010
To inform the Committee that the Council will shortly be required to complete its Annual Return to Standards for England and the format of that Return.

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: N/A

Scrutiny Responsibility: N/A

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by

Legal: Jeremy Thomas
Finance

Policy Framework: N/A

Recommendation(s): 1) That the Committee consider the draft End of Year Report May 2009 – April 2010, make any amendments and approve the report for presentation to Council on 19 April 2010;
2) To note the content of the Annual Return and to authorise the Monitoring Officer to complete the Return in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Purpose of Report

1. It is proposed that the attached draft End of Year Report will be presented to Council on 20th April 2009. Not only does producing an annual report setting out the role and work of the Committee each Council year represent good practice, its content will be used to complete the Annual Return which must be submitted to Standards for England in April 2010. A copy of the Annual Return is attached to this report for information.
2. It is proposed that the end of year report will be presented as being from the Committee. The Chair has had sight of an early draft and made useful amendments.

Recommendation

3. The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to make any amendments and then to approve the report for presentation to Council on 19 April 2010.
4. The Committee is asked to note the Annual Return to the Standards for England and to authorise the Monitoring Officer to complete the Return in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Name and contact details of author: Helen Lynch, Law and Governance

Background papers: None

Report of: Standards Committee
To: Council
Date: 19 April 2010 **Item No:** 6
Title of Report: End of Year Report May 2009 – March 2010

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To summarise the work of the Standards Committee during the period May 2009 to April 2010.

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: N/A

Scrutiny Responsibility: N/A

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by

Legal: Jeremy Thomas, Head of Law and Governance
Finance

Policy Framework: N/A

Recommendation(s): That Council notes the report a copy of which will be sent to the Standards Board for England.

Introduction

1. The general functions of the Standards Committee are to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members and assist Members and co-opted Members to observe the relevant authority's Code of Conduct.

2. The Committee has specific responsibility for advising the Authority on the adoption or revision of a code (e.g. the Member Code of Conduct, the Planning Code of Conduct, the Code on the Use of IT equipment etc), monitoring the operation of a code and advising, training or arranging to train Members and co-opted Members in respect of a Code. This responsibility also extends to cover the 4 Parish Councils within the City.
3. The remit of the Committee, which is wider than many other Standards Committees, also includes the monitoring of the Members Register of Interests, Ombudsman complaints, corporate complaints and the whistle-blowing policy.
4. The Committee has had an active year in exercising these functions. This report sets out the membership of the Committee and summarises the work carried out over the period May 2009 to April 2010.

Membership of the Committee

5. The membership of the Committee remains largely unchanged from the year 2008-09, with John Lay (Chair), Anne Gwinnett (Vice-Chair), Martin Gardner, Meryll Dean and Chris Ballinger continuing as voluntary Independent Members. Councillors Brundin, Craft, Dhall, Sanders and Smith remain as the elected Members of the Committee and Fred Mogridge continued as a Parish Council Representative.
6. Paul Phipps resigned as the Committee's other Parish Council Representative in November 2009. Consequently, on 25th January 2010, Council appointed Nils Bartleet from Old Marston Parish Council as a Parish Council Representative.
7. The Committee continues to be supported by Officers drawn exclusively from Law and Governance.

Complaints Monitoring and Investigations

Code of Conduct Complaints

8. It is almost 2 years since the Committee took over responsibility for the initial assessment of complaints against Members from Standards for England (formerly the Standards Board for England). The arrangements put in place for the handling of these complaints are working well.
9. The Committee has established an Assessment Panel, which makes an initial assessment of the complaints received and a Review Panel, which reconsiders decisions of the Assessment Panel (if requested to do so by the Complainant. This is a statutory right of review and is not therefore discretionary).
10. Each panel consists of 2 Independent Members and one elected member. Where a complaint concerns a Parish Councillor, one of the Committee's

Parish Council Representatives will also sit on the panels. Members of the Committee who sit on an Assessment Panel, cannot sit on the Review Panel relating to the same complaint. The Panels are comprised of any members of the Committee who are available provided that the correct panel composition outlined above is achieved.

11. On receipt of a complaint, the Panels must assess the allegations and decide:
 - that no further action is required; or
 - that the matter should not be referred for investigation but that other action (such as issuing guidance) should be taken; or
 - that the matter should be referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation; or if the matter is sufficiently serious; or
 - that the matter should be referred to the Standards Board for England.
12. Where the Panel decides that a matter should not be investigated the Complainant may request a review of that decision.
13. If a matter is referred for investigation, this will be carried out by a person appointed by the Monitoring Officer. Following that investigation, the whole Committee must determine whether;
 - The member had not failed to comply with the Code of Conduct; or
 - The member had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct but that no further action needs to be taken; or
 - The member had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and that a sanction should be imposed.
14. The Committee can impose any one or a combination of the following sanctions;
 - Censure;
 - Restriction of up to a maximum of 6 months of that member's access to the premises and/or resources of the Authority. This is provided that any such restrictions are reasonable and proportionate to the nature of the breach, and do not unduly restrict the member's ability to perform their functions as a member;
 - Partial suspension of that member for up to 6 months;
 - Full suspension of that member for up to a maximum of 6 months;
 - A requirement that the member submit a written apology in a form specified by the Standards Committee.

The Committee may also recommend that the member completes relevant training to avoid further breaches of the Code.

15. When a complaint is received, the Monitoring Officer notifies the member

concerned and the relevant Group Leader that a complaint has been made and that it will be considered by the Assessment Panel. At this stage, the Member is not invited to make any representations about the complaint. The Assessment Panel considers the complaint and determines whether (on the information provided by the Complainant) the complaint is serious enough, if proven, to justify the range of sanctions available to the Committee. Therefore, at this stage the Member concerned is not asked to make any representations about the complaint. If a complaint is referred for investigation, the Member concerned is asked to respond to the complaint as part of that investigation. In accordance with the Standards for England Regulations, the Assessment Panel meets in private and cannot hear representations from either the Complainant or the Member concerned.

16. The Committee considers the Assessment Panel decision notices. This process acts as a public promulgation of the decisions reached and promotes a consistency of approach as between individual members of the Committee.
17. At the end of each quarter, the Monitoring Officer is required to submit a report to the Standards Board for England detailing the number of complaints received, the outcome of the initial assessment, the review process and any investigations.
18. The Committee can only consider complaints that relate to a breach of the Code of Conduct such as allegations of bullying, failing to treat others with respect, failing to register an interest, or bringing the Authority into disrepute. Complaints will only be referred for investigation:
 - if they believe it is serious enough, if proven, to justify the range of sanctions available to the Committee; or
 - If it is part of a continuing pattern of less serious misconduct that is unreasonably affecting the business of the Authority and there is no other avenue left to deal with it, short of investigation; or
 - If it is an anonymous complaint but includes documentary or photographic evidence indicating an exceptionally serious or significant matter.

When deciding whether to refer a matter for investigation, the Committee will have regard to the length of time that has elapsed since the alleged conduct occurred.

19. The Committee will not consider complaints if:
 - They are not sufficiently serious to merit the imposition of one of the sanctions available to the Committee;
 - They appear to be malicious or politically motivated;
 - The same, or a substantially similar allegation has already been the subject of an investigation;

- The complaint concerns acts carried out in the member's private life, when they are not carrying out the work of the Authority
- The act complained of happened so long ago, there would be little merit in conducting an investigation now;
- There is insufficient information available to justify referring the matter for investigation.

Complaints received

20. Since May 2009 to date, 10 complaints have been received and considered by the Standards Committee. In 9 of the cases the Assessment Panel decided that the matters did not merit being referred for investigation. However, in one instance the Panel decided that "other action should be taken" in terms of asking the Monitoring Officer to advise all Group Leaders that conduct involving displays of intemperance or anger could leave Members open to allegations that they had breached the Code of Conduct and that formal investigations to establish whether there has been a breach, and the imposition of sanctions against Members might result.
21. In one case (considered in January 2010), the Complainant requested a review of the Assessment Panel's decision to take no action. Arrangements are currently being made to convene a Review Panel accordingly.
22. In September 2009, the Committee referred an allegation that a Member had failed to declare a personal and prejudicial interest at a number of meetings to the Monitoring Officer for investigation. The investigation was carried out by an Officer (appointed by the Monitoring Officer) who concluded that the Member in question did not have a personal or prejudicial interest as alleged by the complainant and consequently there had been no failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. The Standards Committee met in January 2010 to consider the Investigating Officer's report. The Committee resolved unanimously to uphold the Investigating Officer's conclusion.
23. The complaints related to 5 different sections of the Code. In some cases, one complaint related to more than one section. The relevant sections of the Code and the number of times they were cited by complainants is set out below:

Section of the Code	No. of times cited
Failure to treat others with respect	8
Failing to declare interests	4
Bullying	4
Bringing the Authority/Office into disrepute	3

24. In 7 cases the complaints arose out of Members' behaviour at meetings of

Area Committees, the Strategic Development Control Committee and/or Council. One complaint arose out of behaviour of a Parish Councillor at a Parish Council meeting, 1 at a private meeting between Portfolio Holders and Community Groups and 1 failure to call in a planning application.

Time Taken to Deal with Complaints

25. Standards for England recommends that Assessment Panels aim to consider a complaint within 20 working days of receipt. The average time between receipt of a complaint and the meeting of the Assessment Panel for this Committee is 19 days.
26. Decision notices are issued within an average of 6 days after the Assessment Panel/Review Panel meetings. Standards for England recommends that Committees should aim to issue a decision notice within 5 working days.
27. The investigation referred to at paragraph 22 was carried out within 4 months from the date the Assessment Panel referred it for investigation. Standards for England require investigations to be carried out within 6 months of the date of referral.

Trends

28. The number of complaints received has doubled since last year. The high number of complaints tends to suggest that the public awareness of the complaints regime is good. Despite the increase in complaints, the Committee is pleased that the number which merit investigation remains low. This reflects well on the ethical behaviour of the Authority.

Corporate Complaints

29. As part of its monitoring role and in seeking to ensure high standards of governance, the Committee has continued to monitor the number of corporate complaints about Council services received. This included consideration of the Authority's response to those complaints.
30. Where appropriate the Committee may request further detail or explanation in relation to some information reported. The Committee may also make recommendations to the Authority as to how the number of complaints may be reduced and how complaints of a particular type might be avoided in the future
31. Last year a new feedback form was introduced that covers complaints, compliments and comments from members of the public. Work is now underway to ensure that all feedback received from customers and the subsequent action taken is recorded on either the Council's new Customer Relations Management (CRM) system or, for those services for which CRM has yet to be introduced, a parallel system on which the same type of information is recorded. This will allow information to be captured in a

consistent way across services and mean that the Council can learn from and direct resources to resolve customer concerns.

32. It is anticipated that this process will be trialled from April 2010. In the meantime, Service Heads are reviewing complaint handling arrangements in their respective areas so that they have robust procedures in place for identifying and resolving issues raised by customers. Once the process has been operational for approximately 6 months, an audit of the complaints handling process will be carried out. The Committee welcomes the new approach in recording feedback and looks forward to hearing the outcome of the audit.

Ombudsman Investigations

32. The Committee is also responsible for monitoring the Authority's handling of Ombudsman investigations. The Committee is kept up to date twice yearly with all complaints referred to the Ombudsman and where appropriate makes recommendations or suggestions for dealing with matters of concern arising from such complaints.
33. In the last year the ombudsman has considered 19 complaints against the Authority. In three cases the Ombudsman made recommendations, which resulted in local settlements. In one case, the Ombudsman exercised his discretion not to investigate and 4 cases were outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. In respect of the remaining 11 cases the Ombudsman found that there had been no maladministration. The Committee is pleased to note that the Ombudsman has not issued any formal reports against the Council.

Work Programme

34. For the second year running, the Committee agreed a work programme, which allocated matters for which the Committee is responsible to the Committee's four ordinary meetings in the 2009/10 Council Year. The Committee is pleased to report that all items on the work programme have been completed as timetabled. A copy of the work programme is attached to this report at Appendix A. Council will note that the Committee reviewed a number of sections in the Council's Constitution before it was readopted by Council at its January meeting. Standards for England consider it to be good practice to have a work programme and the Committee will be agree a new work programme for the 2010/11 Council Year a draft of which will be made available to Group Leaders.

New Member Code of Conduct

35. Last year's report referred to the Committee's response to the government's proposed revision of the Model Code of Conduct. It was anticipated that the new Code would be introduced early this year. However, the Committee has received notification from Standards for England that the new Code will not be laid during this Parliamentary

session due to insufficient Parliamentary time. This means that the new Code will now not be laid until after a general election.

Training

36. All Members have attended training sessions on the Code of Conduct and Planning matters. Members who sit on the Council's licensing committees also received Licensing training. The Committee is pleased to note that the feedback from these sessions has been positive.
37. Following the success of last year's induction programme for new Members it is proposed that a similar programme will be run following the election later this year. The induction will include a Fresher's Fair and will incorporate the compulsory training on the Code of Conduct. All Members will be required to attend this training.
38. Martin Gardner and the Monitoring Officer attended the 8th Annual Assembly of Standards Committees in Birmingham in October 2009. This year's theme was "Bringing Standards into Focus".
39. Following last year's successful joint training session for all Standards Committees in Oxfordshire, the Committee arranged for Standards for England to deliver another session on "Assessments, hearings, decisions and a new Code?" on 4th March 2010.
40. Previous reports have referred to the Independent Members Forum which comprised the Independent Members from the Berkshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire County and District Councils Standards Committees. This Forum has been discontinued. However, the Committee is keen to maintain liaison arrangements between the other Oxfordshire Standards Committees. The Chairs and Vice Chairs met after the joint training session in March (paragraph 37 refers) to discuss how this might be best achieved.

Raising the Profile of the Committee

41. The Committee is committed to raising its profile within the Council and Community. The Chair and Vice-Chair met recently with the Chief Executive and Leader to discuss the work of the Committee and issues of ethical governance. These meetings will be held on a regular basis going forward.
42. The Committee is also in the process of creating its own web page to appear on the Council's internet site, which highlights the role and work of the Committee.
43. The training sessions on the Code of Conduct (paragraph 35 refers) provided a good opportunity to introduce the Independent Members of the Committee to the authority's elected Members.

Conclusion

44. The Committee will continue to maintain its active role in ensuring the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct within the Authority.
45. The Committee will continue to provide and promote training for all Members of the Council.
46. The Committee will continue to assess and review complaints as and when they are received.
47. If and when the new Model Code of Conduct is laid before Parliament following a general election, the Committee will make recommendations as to the adoption of a revised Code if appropriate.
48. The Committee will agree a Work Programme for the Council year 2010 - 2011.

Recommendation

49. That Council note the report a copy of which will be sent to the Standards Board for England.

Name and contact details of author: Helen Lynch, Law and Governance, ext. 2806.

Background papers: None

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Meeting	Work Programme
6 th June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of Interests form completion by new City and Parish Councillors – report • Code of Conduct training for new City and Parish members – report • Complaints monitoring – October 2007 – March 2008 • Annual Audit Letter – to consider anything relevant
5 th September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of Councillors' interests – monitoring report • Training - monitoring report • Planning Code of Practice – monitoring and review • IT Code of Practice – monitoring and /review • Relationship between Standards/Audit/Scrutiny • Comment on Code revisions if published by the Government
5 th December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of Councillors' interests – monitoring report • Training – monitoring report • Whistle Blowing Policy – monitoring and review • Councillor/Officer Relations Code – monitoring and review • Report back on the 2008 Standards Board for England Annual Assembly • Comment on Code revisions if published by the Government • Members' Code of Conduct – monitoring and review • Review of local hearings arrangements, locally and nationally. • Complaints monitoring – April – September 2008
6 th March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of Councillors' interests – monitoring report • Training - monitoring report • Annual Report – draft • Comment on Code revisions if published by the Government • Role of Standards Committee - review

Items in bold type were not completed in 2008/09.

ANNEX 2**STANDARDS COMMITTEE – SUGGESTED WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10**

Meeting	Work Programme
12 th June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of work programme 2009/10• Training Plan 2009/10• Complaints monitoring – October 2008 – March 2009• Annual Audit letter• Independent members' forum matters• Parish Council periodic report
11 th September 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training Plan – progress• Parish Council periodic report• Revised Members' Code of Conduct• Independent members' forum matters• Committee effectiveness and profile• Member – Officer Relations Code review
4 th December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training Plan – progress• Parish Council periodic report• 2009 Standards Board Assembly – report back by delegates• Independent members' forum matters• Complaints monitoring – April – September 2009• Planning Code of Conduct review
5 th March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parish Councils periodic report• Independent members' forum matters• Annual Report• Local filter hearings – review• Members' Code of Conduct – monitoring and review• Committee membership
June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training Plan – review of the year• Training Plan – 2010/11• Review of 2009/10 work programme• Approval of work programme 2010/11• Review of Committee effectiveness• Annual Audit letter• Complaints monitoring – October 2009 – March 2010• Independent members' forum matters• Parish Council periodic report

Annual Return

2010

This document is a list of the questions you will be asked in our 2010 Annual Return. The Annual Return will be an online form, accessible via our website. When we launch the online version you will be able to use the same login details that you use when accessing the quarterly return.

We have provided you with the questions early so that you can prepare in advance of the submission window, which will be either late March or early April 2010. An announcement containing the exact details of this will be made at a later date.

This will hopefully give you the opportunity to discuss the questions with your standards committee and other parties as necessary.

For those of you who completed last year's annual return, you will notice that only a handful of the questions are the same. We have made some significant changes to enable us to gather new information about how the local standards framework is functioning. There are 5 sections this year, communication, influence, training and support, investigations and a section only for authorities with parishes.

As with last year, the information you give us will feed into our Annual Review and we will be looking for items of notable practice to share with the standards community. We will once again be sharing your responses with the Audit Commission, to help inform their organisational "Use of Resources, Key Line of Enquiry" assessment.

When considering the questions, please refer to the guidance notes, as they will give you more details about the question and how to answer it.

If you are unsure about anything in this document, please contact our monitoring team on 0161 817 5300 or by emailing authorityreturns@standardsforengland.gov.uk.

PART 1: COMMUNICATION

The main roles of a standards committee are:

- to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members
- to assist members in observing the Code of Conduct.

Your responses to this section will help us to collect examples of the different ways that standards committees communicate messages about ethical standards, both within the authority and to the wider public.

Annual Report

1) Does the standards committee produce an annual report?

YES/NO. If yes go to q2. If no go to q4

2) What does the report contain?

- A personal statement by the standards committee chairman
- Information about the members of the standards committee
- The role of the standards committee
- The standards committee terms of reference
- Information about the Code of Conduct
- Statistical information about complaints that have been received
- Information about the length of time taken dealing with complaints
- A summary of complaints which have led to investigation, sanction or other action
- Details about training/events provided
- The forward work plan of the standards committee
- Other (*You will be asked for more details if selected*)

3) How is the standards committee annual report circulated?

Note: If your return is not on the website please forward a copy to us. See the guidance notes for details.

- Sent to all senior officers
- Sent to all members
- Sent to parish/town councils (This is only displayed if your authority is applicable)
- Available on the authority intranet
- Available as a specific item on the authority website (You will be asked for the website address if selected)
- Available in the standards committee papers published on the authority website (You will be asked for the website address if selected)
- Included as a full authority meeting agenda item
- Publicised in local newspaper / press release
- Distributed to households
- Available at authority offices
- Not circulated outside of the standards committee
- Other (You will be asked for more details if selected)

Publicising Complaints

4) How can the public access information about how to make a complaint against a member?

- Through a 'compliments and complaints' type section of the council website (You will be asked for the website address if selected)
- Through the standards committee section of the website (You will be asked for the website address if selected)
- Complaints leaflets available from the authority
- Included as part of a council newsletter
- Advertised through parish councils
- Information is not available to the public
- Other (You will be asked for more details if selected)

5) How can the public access information about the outcome of initial assessment decisions?

- Written summary available for public inspection
- Press release issued for all initial assessment decisions
- Press release issued only if the subject member agrees
- Assessment decisions published on the authority website
- Articles published in the authority newsletter
- Other (You will be asked for more details if selected)

6) How can the public access information about the outcome of investigations?

- Hearings are open to the public
- Press release issued for all investigation outcomes
- Press release issued only if the subject member agrees
- Published on the authority website
- Decision notices are available for public inspection
- Articles in the authority newsletter
- Other (You will be asked for more details if selected)

7) Do you have a mechanism in place for measuring the satisfaction of all those involved in allegations of misconduct? For example the member, complainant and witnesses.

YES/NO. If yes go to q8. If no go to q9

8) If yes, please can you describe the process?

Open question

Communicating the role and work of the standards committee and standards generally

9) What does the authority do to promote the work of the standards committee and standards generally to the rest of the authority (i.e. internally)?

- Dedicated standards committee pages on intranet
- Standards committee has its own newsletter / bulletin
- Standards committee issues briefing notes
- Articles in employee newsletter / bulletin
- Standards committee independent members **observe** other authority meetings
- Standards committee independent members **contribute** to other authority meetings (*a box will appear to ask for further details about what kind of contribution*)
- Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)

10) How can the public access information about your standards committee?

- Dedicated standards committee section on the authority website (*you will be asked for the website address if selected*)
- Within 'council and democracy' type section of website (*you will be asked for the website address if selected*)
- Ethical standards issues have been included in the local press / media
- Standards committee minutes, agendas, and reports are available to the public
- Leaflets and/or posters are placed in public buildings
- Places articles in the authority newsletter / bulletin / other publication
- Standards committee meetings are observed by members of the public
- Information is not available to the public
- Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)

11) What else does the authority do to promote the work of the standards committee and standards generally to the public and other partners?

Open question

PART 2: INFLUENCE

A key factor in creating a strong ethical framework in authorities is clear ethical leadership from leaders and chief executives, setting the tone for the rest of the organisation.

Your responses to this section will help us to understand how closely your standards committee works with political and officer leadership in the authority, and the ways in which the leadership encourages strong ethical standards.

12) How does the standards committee communicate ethical issues to the senior figures within your authority (for example the Chief Executive and Leader of the Authority, Party Leaders)?

- Formal meetings between standards committee members and senior figures specifically set up to discuss standards
- Informal discussion on particular standards issues
- Senior figure attendance at standards committee meetings
- Monitoring Officer is a member of or attends Corporate Management Team (or equivalent) meetings
- Executive or senior member has portfolio responsibility for standards
- Chair (or other standards committee member) addresses full authority meeting(s)
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

13) How do the senior figures in your authority demonstrate strong ethical values?

- Through a strongly promoted whistle-blowing policy
- By ensuring there are references to ethics in the authority vision / objectives
- Demonstrating appropriate behaviours
- Senior figure(s) makes personal commitment to standards in statements to public/employees
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

14) Does your authority have a protocol for partnership working that outlines the standards of behaviour expected of all those working in partnership?

YES/NO

15) What mechanisms does the authority use for dealing with member/officer and/or member/member disputes?

- Informal discussion/mediation
- Monitoring Officer mediation
- Chair of standards committee mediation
- Senior figure mediation (e.g. Chief Executive)
- Advice from Human Resources department
- Solicitor / legal adviser consulted
- Informal hearing
- No mechanisms other than normal complaints process
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

PART 3: TRAINING AND SUPPORT

A specific function of a standards committee is to train members on The Code of Conduct, or arrange for such training. A standards committee can also arrange training on the local standards framework. Your responses to this section will help us to form a view about what the most common topics and methods of training are so that we can share them with the rest of the standards community.

- 16) Between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2010, has the authority assessed the training and development needs of authority members in relation to their responsibilities on standards of conduct?**

YES/NO. If yes, go to q18. If no, go to q17

- 17) If no, please give your reasons why?**

Open question. Go to q19

- 18) If yes, what needs were identified?**

- Introduction to the Code of Conduct
- Elements of the Code of Conduct
- The role and responsibilities of the standards committee
- Ethical governance/behaviour
- None

- 19) What training/support was provided during the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010?**

- Introduction to the Code of Conduct
- Elements of the Code of Conduct
- Role and responsibilities of the standards committee
- Ethical governance/behaviour
- Other (You will be asked for more details if selected)
- None (go to q25)

20) Who received training/support?

- Standards committee chair
- Independent members
- Other standards committee members
- All authority members
- Specific authority members with particular needs (e.g. new members, planning committee members)
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

21) What methods were employed to give training/support?

- Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops)
- External trainer/speaker
- One on one training
- Joint/regional training event
- Online learning
- Guidance notes/briefing materials
- Standards for England materials
- Ethical governance toolkit
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

22) In which areas of the Code of Conduct has training/support been provided?
(Only displayed if 'elements of the Code of Conduct' is selected at q19)

- Respect
- Personal/Prejudicial Interests
- Use of resources
- Bullying
- Disrepute
- Predisposition, Pre-determination and bias
- Equality
- Confidentiality
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

23) What other training/support has been provided on areas of an authority member's role or activities they may engage in?

- Chairing skills
- Lobbying
- Predetermination, Predisposition and bias
- Blogging and/or the use of social media
- Electioneering
- Freedom of Information (FOI)
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*
- None

24) In general, how well attending was the training provided?

- 75% or more of those invited
- 50-75%
- 25-50%
- 0-25%

25) Please give a brief overview of how standards issues are covered in your induction process for new members of the authority?

Open question

26) In which areas of the role and responsibilities of the standards committee has training/support been provided for standards committee members? Please tick all that apply. (Only displayed if 'role and responsibilities of the standards committee' is selected at q19)

- Initial assessments
- Other action/mediation
- Reviews
- Investigations
- Hearings
- Sanctions
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

PART 4: INVESTIGATIONS

27) How many investigations have been conducted during the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010?

Enter number

If the answer is '0', go to q33 (only if your authority is parished). If you do not have parished you will have completed the questions.

If the answer is '1' or more go to q28

28) Of the investigations completed during the period, for how many have external investigators been used?

NOTE: This includes employees of other authorities

Enter number

29) Overall, what was your principle reason for out-sourcing the investigation(s)? (*Only appears the number given in question 28 is more than 0*)

- Impartiality
- Lack of staff resources
- To complete the investigation sooner
- Skills required
- Cost
- Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)

30) What type of external investigator(s) did you use?

- Employee of another authority
- Self-employed investigator
- Private law firm
- Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)

31) For the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010, what was the approximate total cost of fees paid to the external investigator(s)?

Open question (for an amount)

32) Please provide a brief overview of the processes you have in place to ensure the quality of local investigations.

Open question

PART 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

(You will only be asked these questions if your authority has parishes)

We recognise the value of the vital role parish councillors play in representing their communities. Your responses to this section will help us to build a clearer picture of the level of support and communication between principle and parish/town councils.

33) Has your authority provided training for parish councillors during the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010?

YES/NO. If yes go to q34. If no go to q37

34) If yes, what topics did the training cover?

- Freedom of Information (FOI)
- Confidential information
- Planning
- Lobbying
- Dual-hatted members
- The Code of Conduct generally
- Personal and prejudicial interests
- Bullying
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

35) What methods were employed to give training/support?

- Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops)
- External speakers
- One on one training
- Joint/regional event
- Guidance notes/briefing materials
- Standards for England's materials
- CALC speakers
- Part of wider parish liaison meeting

Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

36) In general, how well attended was the training for parish councillors?

- 75% or more of those invited
- 50-75% of those invited
- 25-50%
- 0-25%

37) Has your authority provided training for parish clerks during the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010?

YES/NO If yes got to q38. If no go to q41

38) What topics did the training for parish clerks cover?

- Freedom of Information (FOI)
- Working with confidential information
- Planning
- Lobbying
- Dual-hatted members
- The Code of Conduct generally
- Personal and prejudicial interests
- Bullying
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

39) If yes, what methods were employed to give training/support to parish clerks?

- One on one training
- Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops)
- External speakers
- Guidance notes/briefing materials
- Standards for England's materials
- Joint authority/regional event
- Other *(you will be asked for more details if selected)*

40) In general, how well attended was the training for parish clerks?

- 75% or more of those invited
- 50-75% of those invited
- 25-50%
- 0-25%

41) Does your council have a COMPACT (a formal agreement with your county Association of Local Councils about supporting standards for parish and town councils in the area)?

YES/NO

42) Describe the relationship between your authority and your County Association of Local Councils in relation to standards. For example, how regularly do you interact with them? Are you involved in delivering joint training?

Open question

43) Standards for England and Teesside University are currently researching the role of the Parish Liaison Officer. Teesside University have created a brief questionnaire to assess the organisational background, functions and skills needed to carry out the Parish Liaison role. Does your authority have a Parish Liaison Officer?

YES/NO/No but there is someone who fulfils the same functions

If yes or someone who fulfils the same functions go to q44. If no go to q45

44) Does the Parish Liaison Officer (or the person who fulfils the same functions) consent for the University of Teesside to contact them to complete a brief questionnaire about their role?

YES/NO If yes you will be asked the details below. If no go to q45.

If yes, please provide contact details (where there are multiple Parish Liaison Officers, just provide one contact):

Name:

Contact address:

Contact phone:

Email address:

- 45) What steps have you taken when dealing with parishes which have had problems with standards issues? For example, what preventative or capacity building work have you done with parishes?**

Open question

- 46) Which of the following areas would you like Standards for England to produce additional guidance on to support your work with parishes?**

- Lobbying
- Predetermination and bias
- Planning and interests
- Dual-hatted members
- Other (*you will be asked for more details if selected*)