



## Annual Return form - 2010

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### PART 1: COMMUNICATION

#### Annual Report

#### Does the standards committee produce an annual report?

Yes

#### What does the report contain?

- |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A personal statement by the standards committee chairman                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information about the members of the standards committee                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The role of the standards committee                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The standards committee terms of reference                                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information about the Code of Conduct                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Statistical information about complaints that have been received                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information about the length of time taken dealing with complaints | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A summary of complaints which have led to investigation, sanction or other action |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Details about training/events provided                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The forward work plan of the standards committee                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                                                         |                                                                                                                       |

#### How is the standards committee annual report circulated?

- |                                                                                      |                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to all senior officers                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sent to all members                                                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to parish/town councils                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Available on the authority intranet                                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Available as a specific item on the authority website       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Available in the standards committee papers published on the authority website |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Included as a full authority meeting agenda item | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicised in local press                                                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distributed to households                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Available at authority offices                                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not circulated outside of the standards committee           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                                                                     |

**The report is "Available in the standards committee papers published on the authority website", please provide the web address.**

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decCD/councilmeetings.htm>

#### Publicising Complaints

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

- |                                                                                                                |                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Through a 'compliments and complaints' type section of the council website | <input type="checkbox"/> Through the standards committee section of the website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complaints leaflets available from the authority                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Included as part of a council newsletter               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertised through parish councils                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Information is not available to the public             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                                                                 |                                                                                 |

**The information is on the "compliments and complaints' type section of the council website", please provide the web address.**

[http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decCD/Complaints\\_Against\\_Councillors\\_occw.h](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decCD/Complaints_Against_Councillors_occw.h)

#### How can the public access information about the outcome of initial assessment

## decisions?

- |                                                                                          |                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written summary available for public inspection      | <input type="checkbox"/> All initial assessment decisions are publicised in the local press |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicised in the local press only if the subject member agrees | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assessment decisions published on the authority website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Articles published in the authority newsletter                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                                                   |

### Please describe the "Other" ways initial assessments are available.

Assessment decisions are included in agenda papers for consideration by Standards Committees. The agenda are available on the Council's website and at Council offices

## How can the public access information about the outcome of investigations?

- |                                                                                                     |                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hearings are open to the public                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> All investigation outcomes are publicised in the local press |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publicised in the local press only if the subject member agrees | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Published on the authority website                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decision notices are available for public inspection                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Articles in the authority newsletter                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                                                           |                                                                                       |

### Please describe the "Other" ways investigation outcomes are available.

Decision notices are included in agenda papers for consideration by the Standards Committee. The agenda are available on the Council's website and at Council offices.

## 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.

No

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

### 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)?

- |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated standards committee pages on intranet                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Standards committee has its own newsletter / bulletin                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standards committee issues briefing notes                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Articles in employee newsletter / bulletin / newspaper                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standards committee independent members observe other authority meetings | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Standards committee independent members contribute to other authority meetings |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                                                         |                                                                                                                    |

### Please give further details of the contributions made to other authority meetings.

At least 1 independent member present at each training session on the Code of Conduct

### Please describe the "Other" methods used.

The Annual Report is taken to Full Council. The Chair and Vice Chair hold regular meetings with the Leader and Chief Executive. All group leaders are to be invited to these meetings going forward. A dedicated Standards Committee Webpage is currently being developed.

## How can the public access information about your standards committee?

- |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated standards committee section on the authority website         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Within 'council and democracy' type section of website                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethical standards issues have been included in the local press / media | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Standards committee minutes, agendas, and reports are available to the public |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leaflets and/or posters are placed in public buildings                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Places articles in the authority newsletter / bulletin / other publication               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standards committee meetings are observed by members of the public     | <input type="checkbox"/> Information is not available to the public                                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                                                  |                                                                                                                   |

### Please provide the web address for information within the council and democracy section of your website.

[http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decCD/committeemeetings.htm?committeeId=2\\_Standards%20Committee.cmt](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decCD/committeemeetings.htm?committeeId=2_Standards%20Committee.cmt)

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

The Oxfordshire Authorities issue joint press releases from time to time regarding the work of the Standards Committee. For example, the new complaints regime was advertised in this way.  
The Council is currently developing a web page dedicated to the work of the Standards Committee.

## PART 2: INFLUENCE

### 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)?

- |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal meetings between standards committee members and senior figures specifically set up to discuss standards | <input type="checkbox"/> Informal discussion on particular standards issues                                                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Senior figure attendance at standards committee meetings                                                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitoring Officer is a member of or attends Corporate Management Team (or equivalent) meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive or senior member has portfolio responsibility for standards                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Chair (or other standards committee member) addresses full authority meeting(s)                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                     |

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

- |                                                                                        |                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Through a strongly promoted whistle-blowing policy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> By ensuring there are references to ethics in the authority vision / objectives           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating appropriate behaviours               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Senior figure(s) makes personal commitment to standards in statements to public/employees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Through any other method                                      |                                                                                                                               |

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

No

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

- |                                                                   |                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informal discussion/mediation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitoring Officer mediation                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chair of standards committee mediation   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Senior figure mediation (e.g. Chief Executive) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advice from Human Resources department   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Solicitor / legal adviser consulted            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Informal hearing                         | <input type="checkbox"/> No mechanisms other than normal complaints process        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                         |                                                                                    |

#### Describe the "Other" mechanisms used.

The Council has a Member Officer Relations Protocol

## PART 3: TRAINING AND SUPPORT

**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

**If yes, what needs were identified?**

- |                                                                                              |                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to the Code of Conduct                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elements of the Code of Conduct |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The role and responsibilities of the standards committee | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ethical governance/behaviour    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                      |

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

- |                                                                                          |                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to the Code of Conduct                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elements of the Code of Conduct |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Role and responsibilities of the standards committee | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ethical governance/behaviour    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                                                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                           |

**Describe the "Other" training/support provided.**

Planning Training for all Members and Licensing Training for Members of Licensing Committees.

The Council arranged for Standards for England to deliver joint training to all of the Oxfordshire Standards Committees

**Who received training/support?**

- |                                                                                                                                     |                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Standards committee chair                                                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent members   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other standards committee members                                                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All authority members |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific authority members with particular needs (e.g. new members, planning committee members) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                            |

**What methods were employed to give training/support?**

- |                                                                                          |                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External trainer/speaker      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One on one training                                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joint/regional training event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Online learning                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance notes/briefing materials        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Standards for England materials                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethical governance toolkit               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                                           |                                                                   |

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

- |                                                                               |                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chairing skills                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lobbying                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Predetermination, Predisposition and bias | <input type="checkbox"/> Blogging and/or the use of social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electioneering                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom of Information (FOI)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                   |

**In general, how well attended was the training provided?**

75% or more of those invited

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

The authority holds a Members Roadshow for all new members of the Authority. As part

of thisd Members are trained on the Code of Conduct and introduced to the Constitution. Members of the Standards Committee attend the Roadshow which is open to existing Members and Officers.

**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.**

Initial assessments

Reviews

Hearings

Other

Other action/mediation

Investigations

Sanctions

## **PART 4: INVESTIGATIONS**

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**Have any investigations been completed during the period 1 April 2009 - 31 March 2010?** Yes

**How many investigations have been completed during this period?**

1

**Have any of the investigations used external investigators?** No

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

Nothing selected

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

The Monitoring Officer appoints an Investigating Officer to carry out the Investigation on his behalf. The Investigating Officer will either be one of the Lawyers that supports the Standards Committee or an officer from one of the other Oxfordshire Authorities. In all cases, the Investigating Officer must be familiar with the Code of Conduct and Ethical Framework. The Investigating Officers use and adapt the toolkit provided by Standards for England. The Monitoring Officer is consulted and kept fully informed throughout the investigation process.

## PART 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

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

Yes

**If yes, what topics did the training cover?**

- |                                                             |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom of Information (FOI)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential information                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Lobbying                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dual-hatted members                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Code of Conduct generally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal and prejudicial interests | <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                              |                                                                   |

**What methods were employed to give training/support?**

- |                                                                                          |                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops) | <input type="checkbox"/> External speakers                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One on one training                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint/regional event                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance notes/briefing materials                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Standards for England's materials    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CALC speakers                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Part of wider parish liaison meeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                                           |                                                               |

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

75% or more of those invited

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

Yes

**What topics did the training for parish clerks cover?**

- |                                                             |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom of Information (FOI)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Working with confidential information    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Lobbying                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dual-hatted members                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Code of Conduct generally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal and prejudicial interests | <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                              |                                                                   |

**What methods were employed to give training/support to parish clerks?**

- |                                                            |                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One on one training               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal training (presentations/seminars/workshops) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> External speakers                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance notes/briefing materials                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standards for England's materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint authority/regional event                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                             |                                                                                          |

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

75% or more of those invited

**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)?**

No



**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?**

The Oxfordshire Authorities hold an annual joint training session which is delivered by an Officer from Standards for England. The Standards Committees are also exploring ways of maintaining links in addition to those annual sessions. The Monitoring Officers of all of the Oxfordshire Authorities meet on a regular basis.

**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?**

No

**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?**

All Parish Councils receive the annual training on the Code of Conduct. To date there have been no problems with Standards issues with the Parish Councils. Of the complaints received between May 2009 and March 2010, only 1 related to a Parish Councillor. This was not referred for investigation.

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

- |                                                 |                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lobbying               | <input type="checkbox"/> Predetermination and bias |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning and interests | <input type="checkbox"/> Dual-hatted members       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other       |                                                    |

**Please describe what "Other" areas you would like covered.**

The Council does not require any additional guidance.

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**End of form**