

Wolverhampton City Council

OPEN DECISION ITEM

Committee/ Panel	STANDARDS COMMITTEE	Date: 1 JULY 2010
Originating Service Group(s)	CUSTOMER AND SHARED SERVICES	
Contact Officer(s)/	S KEMBREY/F DAVIS	
Telephone Number(s)	4910/4932	
Title/Subject Matter	<u>STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND - ANNUAL RETURN</u>	

1.0 **Recommendation**

Members are recommended to:-

1. Note the Annual Return 2010 which has been submitted to Standards for England.
2. That the Annual Return be referred to Council.

STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND - ANNUAL RETURN

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide information on the Annual Return which has been submitted to Standards for England which gives details of the ethical governance framework within the Council, and to refer the Annual Return to Council to support wider governance arrangements and the ethical framework as recommended by Standards for England.

2. Background

- 2.1 Standards for England currently has a strategic role in connection with the ethical framework contained in Part III of the Local Government Act 2000. Complaints alleging that Members have failed to follow the Code of Conduct for Members are dealt with under local standards arrangements via the Standards Committee. Standards for England in its strategic role collates information from Local Authorities about local standards arrangements which have been in place since 8 May 2008.
- 2.2 Standards information has been collated by SFE at two levels. The Quarterly Return from authorities provides information about case handling and all Quarterly Returns for Wolverhampton City Council have been submitted by the Monitoring Officer. Details of returns have been provided to this Committee in the Monitoring Officer's report to each Committee.
- 2.3 In addition to the Quarterly Reports, Standards for England has also required the Monitoring Officer to submit an Annual Return. The purpose of the Annual Return is to detail the arrangements which are in place to ensure and promote high ethical standards detailing the way the authority supports ethical standards as a whole, not just how it handles individual complaints.
- 2.4 The government has announced it intends to bring forward legislation to abolish the Standards for England regime. Further Annual Returns to SFE in the format of the 2010 return will therefore not be required. Details are awaited of arrangements to replace the SFE regime.

3. The Annual Return

- 3.1 The Annual Return 2010 which has been submitted to Standards for England is appended to this report.

4.0 Future Action

- 4.1 It is recommended that a report on the Annual Return be submitted to full Council as recommended by the Standards for England to enable wider governance arrangements within the authority to be considered and to maintain the profile of this important area.

5. **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 This report details arrangements for the Authority to comply with the ethical framework for Local Government contained in Part III of the Local Government Act 2000.

6. **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The Council is required to provide the Monitoring Officer with sufficient resources to undertake her responsibilities. Sufficient provision is currently made in the Revenue budget but the need for resources for the additional devolved responsibilities under Local Assessment from 2009 will have to be addressed, particularly in the event of cases proceeding to investigation.
[DM/23062010/H]

7. **Equal Opportunities Implications**

- 7.1 The Members' Code of Conduct contains specific obligations relating to equal opportunities.

8. **Environmental Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.



Annual Return form - 2010

Authority name Wolverhampton City Council
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PART 1: COMMUNICATION

Annual Report

Does the standards committee produce an annual report?

No

Publicising Complaints

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input 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"/> Information is not available to the public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other |

Please describe the "Other" places the public can access this information.*
www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/council/councillors/complaint.htm

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Other |

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearings are open to the public | <input type="checkbox"/> All investigation outcomes are publicised in the local press |
| <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Other | |

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Other | |

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

The Independent Chair of the Standards Committee attends meetings of Full Council as required.

How can the public access information about your standards committee?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 the standards committee section on the authority website.

www.decisionmaking.wolverhampton.gov.uk/cmis/webpublic/committeedetails

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

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk

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

The Independent Chair is an active member of the community.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informal discussion on particular standards issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior figure attendance at standards committee meetings | <input 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> By ensuring there are references to ethics in the authority vision / objectives |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating appropriate behaviours | <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Solicitor / legal adviser consulted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Informal hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> No mechanisms other than normal complaints process |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

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 type="checkbox"/> Elements of the Code of Conduct |
| <input 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Other |

Who received training/support?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standards committee chair | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other standards committee members | <input 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 type="checkbox"/> External trainer/speaker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One on one training | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint/regional training event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Online learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance notes/briefing materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standards for England materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethical governance toolkit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

In which areas of the Code of Conduct has training/support been provided?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Respect | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal/Prejudicial Interests |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bullying |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disrepute | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Predisposition, Pre-determination and bias |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confidentiality |
| <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairing skills | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other |

Describe the "Other" training/support provided.

Questioning and listening.

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 Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer present a training session on the ethical framework and decision making within the Authority. This forms part of a planned programme of seminars on a range of subjects relevant to new members.

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.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial assessments | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other action/mediation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reviews | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Investigations |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hearings | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sanctions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
-

PART 4: INVESTIGATIONS

Have any investigations been completed during the period 1 April 2009 - 31 March 2010? No



End of form