

Leeds City Council
Standards Committee
Annual Report
2008 – 2009



Introduction

The Local Government Act 2000 requires councils to set up a standards committee. Standards committees have a proactive role in creating an ethical framework which governs the relationship between high standards of conduct and transparency and openness in decision making. As a result of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, the role of the Standards Committee has recently developed to include the local assessment of the complaints.

This is the Committee's fourth Annual Report and it presents a summary of the Leeds City Council Standards Committee's work during 2008/2009. This report supports the Corporate Governance arrangements of the Council by promoting good conduct and cascading information.

Our Ambition

“To help develop and maintain a climate of mutual trust and respect in which Members, officers and partners work effectively together to deliver the Council's strategic and operational priorities and where the public can be assured that this is done in an honest, objective and accountable way.”

Foreword from the Chair



This year the Standards Committee of Leeds City Council was shortlisted in the Standards and Ethics category of the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2009. Six local authorities were shortlisted, from a total of 22 entries, for their dynamic approach to improving and promoting ethical standards among members while boosting public confidence in local democracy. Unfortunately Leeds did not win the award this year, although all the finalists were congratulated at the event.

This year the Standards Committee has successfully met the challenge of adapting to their new local assessment role, and the Council has decided to expand their membership to assist them with this. The additional Members of the Standards Committee will take up their positions on the Committee at the beginning of the 2009/10 municipal year.

We hope you enjoy learning about the Standards Committee and its work throughout the 2008/09 municipal year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Wilkerson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping underline.

Chair of the Standards Committee



Members of the Committee

The Standards Committee is composed of three independent members, five City Councillors, and two Parish Councillors.

Independent Members

The purpose of independent members is to help increase public confidence in ethical standards and provide a clear signal that the Standards Committee is fair. Independent members also bring a wider perspective to the Standards Committee from outside experiences. Independent members are not Members or officers of the Council, and are not actively engaged in local party political activity. They are appointed by the Full Council for terms of four years, and can serve two terms overall. This is to prevent them losing their independence from the authority.

Mike Wilkinson

has been an independent member and Chair of the Committee since 2002. He is also the Chair of the Standards Committee at the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority. Until 2001 he was a University Secretary and Clerk to the Board at Leeds Metropolitan University. He is a magistrate on the Leeds Bench and also acts as an Independent Assessor to the Student Loans Company. He is a Director of UNIPOL Student Homes. His final term of office runs until the Annual Meeting in 2010.



Rosemary Greaves

joined the Standards Committee in 2004 as a reserve independent member. Rosemary previously worked for BT as a Business Manager specialising in business development and strategy which includes developing significant new business propositions or identifying potential acquisition requirements. Rosemary became a full independent member in 2007 and her current term of office runs until the Annual Meeting in 2011.



Philip Turnpenny

joined the Standards Committee in April 2008. Philip is the retired Director of Human Resources at Moores Furniture Group in Wetherby, and now acts as a consultant. Philip is a Magistrate sitting in both the Adult and Family Proceedings Courts in Bradford and a governor at Tadcaster Grammar School as well as the Chairman of their Finance Committee. Philip also sits on the Boards of Foundation Housing and Northcall. Philip's current term of office runs until the Annual Meeting in 2012.



Leeds City Councillors

The Councillors on the Standards Committee are representatives of all five political groups within the Council. The Standards Committee is not politically balanced, this is because the standards committee should be above party politics and its members need to have the respect of the whole authority, regardless of their political party.

Councillor Les Carter

is a member of the Conservative Group and has been a Leeds City Councillor since 1973. He represents the Adel and Wharfedale ward on Leeds City Council and is also an Executive Board Member with responsibility for Neighbourhoods and Housing. Councillor Carter's areas of responsibility include housing policy and strategy, community safety, regeneration, homelessness and environmental health.



Councillor Elizabeth Nash

is a member of the Labour Group and has been a Leeds City Councillor from 1973 to 1988, and 1989 to present. She was also a member of the Leeds County Borough Council from 1972 to 1974. She represents the City and Hunslet ward on Leeds City Council, has been a member of the Committee since 2003, and is also a member of the City Centre Plans Panel.



Councillor Colin Campbell

is a member of the Liberal Democrat Group and represents the Otley and Yeadon ward on Leeds City Council. Councillor Campbell is also the Chair of Plans Panel (West), and a member of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and Scrutiny Board (City and Regional Partnerships).



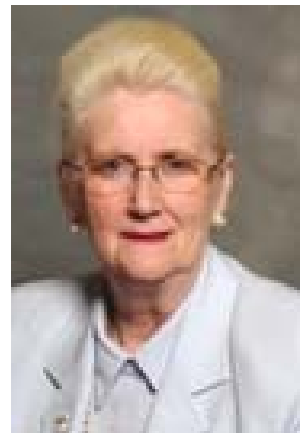
Councillor David Blackburn

is the Leader of the Green Group and represents the Farnley and Wortley ward on Leeds City Council. Councillor Blackburn is also a member of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and the City Centre Plans Panel.



Councillor Judith Elliott

is a member of the Morley Borough Independent Group and represents the Morley South ward on Leeds City Council. Councillor Elliott is also a member of the Children's Services Scrutiny Board and a member of Morley Town Council. Councillor Elliott will be leaving the Committee next year as she takes up her position as Lord Mayor of Leeds for the municipal year 2009/2010.



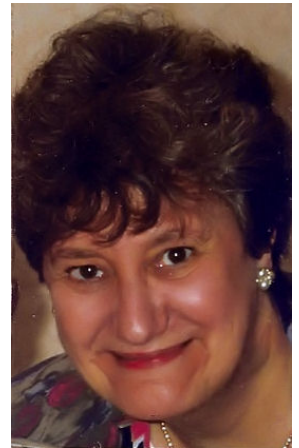
Parish Councillors

The role of the Parish Councillors on the Standards Committee is to make sure that the parish and town councils in Leeds are represented throughout discussions. At least one of the Parish Councillors must sit on the Standards Committee at all times when parish matters are being discussed. As the Standards Committee also has responsibility for the Parish and Town Councillors in the Leeds area, the Parish Councillors on the Standards

Committee demonstrate that parish issues are going to be dealt with fairly. They also bring an additional independent perspective to the Committee as they are not able to be members of Leeds City Council.

Councillor Mrs Pat Walker

is a member of Pool-in-Wharfedale Parish Council which she was elected to for the first time 7 years ago. She is lead member on conservation matters. Previously a Harrogate District Councillor, she has been involved in politics at local, national and European levels. A business manager in Leeds and Harrogate for 25 years, she is now an active member of the Ruskin Society and is presently a Foundation Governor of Prince Henry's Grammar School, Otley. Councillor Walker's current term of office runs until the Annual Meeting in 2009, where she is expected to be reappointed for another term.



Councillor John C Priestley

joined the Committee in 2005 as a reserve parish member and became a full member in 2007. He is a retired (litigation) solicitor and was a senior partner of Booth & Co. Leeds. He retired in 2002 and is now the Chairman of East Keswick Parish Council. He is also a Trustee of the W.W. Spooner Charitable Trust. Councillor Priestley's current term of office runs until the Annual Meeting in 2011.



Monitoring Officer to the Committee

Nicolé Jackson – Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) and Monitoring Officer

After qualifying as a solicitor at Calderdale Council, Nicolé worked at Bradford and Kirklees Councils, prior to moving to Leeds in June 1990. Nicolé became Senior Assistant Director and subsequently Chief Legal Officer in 1994 and 1999 respectively, and was appointed to her current role of Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) in 2007. Nicolé is also a part time Chair of the Midland Rent Assessment Panel.



Introduction to the Standards Committee

The general functions of the Standards Committee are:

- ▶ Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted members; and
- ▶ Assisting Members and co-opted members to observe the Code of Conduct.

The terms of reference for the Committee are:

- ▶ Promoting, monitoring and reviewing the rules controlling the behaviour of Councillors and Officers (Code of Conduct);
- ▶ To initially assess and review complaints against Leeds City Councillors and Parish and Town Councillors in Leeds and to decide what action (if any) to take;
- ▶ To consider the results of any investigation into the behaviour of Councillors and decide whether their behaviour has broken the rules described above. If the Councillor is found to have broken the rules, the Committee decide what punishment to impose;
- ▶ To make suggestions to and work with other agencies about standards issues and the different codes of conduct. This involves taking part in research projects and consultation exercises, as well as making suggestions for improvement and best practice to the Standards Board for England;
- ▶ To provide advice and guidance to Members and officers and to make arrangements for training them on standards issues; and
- ▶ To advise the Council about changes which need to be made to the code of conduct for Officers and to promote, monitor and review this code.

Please note that the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 also imposed new duties on standards committees in relation to politically restricted posts. However, the relevant regulations to enable the Standards Committee to take up these duties have not yet been released.

The Work of the Committee 2008 – 2009

Promoting, monitoring and reviewing the Codes of Conduct

The Standards Committee exists to promote and maintain high standards of conduct within the Council, and has considered several important standards issues over the past year.

- ▶ **Members' Code of Conduct 2009** – The Standards Committee responded to the Communities and Local Government consultation document “Codes of conduct for local authority Members and employees: a consultation” in December 2008. Members of the Committee considered feedback from various Member and officer fora, including the Member Management Committee, the Council’s Corporate Leadership Team, the Corporate Governance Board and the Group Whips, before finalising the Standards Committee response.
- ▶ **Reviewing the Codes and Protocols** - The Standards Committee has responsibility for several codes and protocols in the Constitution. To ensure that these are operating effectively, are being complied with, and are fit for purpose the Standards Committee has added regular reports regarding these codes and protocols to its work programme. This year the Standards Committee has reviewed:
 - the Code of Practice for the Determination of Licensing Matters
 - the Code of Practice for the Determination of Planning Matters;
 - the Monitoring Officer Protocol; and
 - the Standards Committee Media Protocol.

The Committee also extensively reviewed its own Procedure Rules in July in line with the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 and the new guidance from the Standards Board for England. The Standards Committee has delayed reviewing any of the codes and protocols which would be affected by the new Member and employee Codes of Conduct due to be released in May 2009.

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- ▶ **Ethical Audit 2007** - The Standards Committee considered the final results of the Ethical Audit 2007 in October this year, and approved an action plan to address these results and remaining issues from the Ethical Audit 2006. In the new action plan the Standards Committee particularly focused on the Ethical Framework Training and Awareness programme to be developed by Human Resources and made available to employees as appropriate. The Standards Committee agreed that they would monitor progress against this action through receiving regular reports from Human Resources.

 - ▶ **Monitoring compliance with the Code of Conduct** - The Standards Committee receives six monthly reports on the number and types of complaints that have been referred to the Standards Board regarding Leeds City Council Members and Parish and Town Councillors in the Leeds area. The report also identifies any trends in the information so that the Committee can seek to address these matters through guidance and training. The Standards Committee received the last of these reports on October 2008, as complaints from May 2008 are received by Leeds City Council rather than the Standards Board. See the separate section on Local Assessment for more details of the complaints received since May 2008.

 - ▶ **Considering final investigation reports** – The Standards Committee has considered two final investigation report since May 2008, which contained a finding of no failure. In the first case the complainant alleged that the Councillor had breached paragraphs 2(b) of the Members' Code of Conduct by demonstrating a lack of basic manners and respect for others. However the investigating officer found no evidence of any failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. The Standards Committee agreed with the investigating officer that the Councillor had not breached the Code of Conduct as alleged.

In the second case the complainant had alleged that the former Councillor had breached paragraph 5 of the Members' Code of Conduct

by bringing his office or authority into disrepute. The Standards Committee agreed with the investigator's finding that the former Councillor had only been acting in his official capacity from the point at which he identified himself as a Councillor, and that his conduct from then on would not have brought his office or authority into disrepute. The Standards Committee were also assured that the new local assessment procedures would safeguard against any delays in processing future complaints.

- ▶ **Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality** - The Standards Committee seeks to reassure itself that the Members' register of interests is being reviewed and updated by Members on a regular basis and that the rules surrounding the registration of gifts and hospitality are being observed. The Committee receives annual reports to this effect, the last report on this subject having been considered on 1st July 2008. In this report the Committee were informed of the results of an Internal Audit Inspection carried out at the end of 2007 on the Register of Interests and the Register of Gifts and Hospitality for Members. In the case of the registration of gifts and hospitality, the audit identified that there are satisfactory procedures in place to ensure that members promptly register any acceptance of gifts and hospitality in accordance with the Code of Conduct. A substantial assurance opinion was provided both in respect of the control environment and compliance. The Standards Committee were satisfied that the review arrangements in place are fit for purpose.
- ▶ **Officer Code of Conduct** - The Standards Committee received a report in October 2008 from Human Resources which reported on the requirement to ensure that development of key competencies and behaviours for managers included appropriate reference to ethical framework. The Head of Human Resources Strategy reported that the results of the Ethical Audit 2006 were being addressed by:

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- Manager Briefings - using a standard briefing for Human Resources staff to consider ethical audit findings with groups of managers;
 - Clearer induction – updating induction materials for new staff; and
 - Developing leadership standards which include governance matters.

It was agreed that the Head of Human Resources Strategy would report back on progress on these issues in due course.

Local Assessment of Complaints

Since May 2008, the Standards Committee has had responsibility for initially assessing and reviewing complaints against Leeds City Councillors and Parish and Town Councillors in the Leeds area. During this year the Standards Committee has both initially assessed 19 cases, and reviewed five of these.

- ▶ **Creation of the Assessment and Review Sub-Committees** – The Standards Committee considered how it would discharge its new duties under the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 in July 2008. The Committee established two Sub-Committees to assess and review complaints against Members of Leeds City Councillors and the Parish and Town Councils within Leeds. The Standards Committee also decided to give the Assessment Sub-Committee the additional function of considering final investigation reports and deciding whether they agree with the investigators findings.

The table below shows the number of complaints which have been made about Councillors in Leeds during this municipal year, and the number which have been referred for further investigation. The Assessment Sub-Committee has met ten times to consider a total of 19 complaints, and the Review Sub-Committee has carried out five reviews over four meetings.

Authority	Number of Complaints	Number of Councillors referred for investigation	Number of Councillors referred for other action
Leeds City Council	16	5 (these investigations are all ongoing)	1
Parish and Town Councils	3	0	0

► **Adopting the Local Assessment Procedures** – At their meeting in July 2008, the Standards Committee also had to consider how they would make decisions regarding whether complaints should be referred for investigation, other action, or to take no action at all. Using the Standards Board for England’s guidance the Standards Committee developed a set of local assessment criteria which has helped them decide what action to take in relation to each complaint. The Committee also developed local criteria for deciding if a complainant can have their complaint considered confidentially. These criteria are contained in the guidance leaflet “How to complain about the behaviour of a Councillor” and also within the Standards Committee Procedure Rules.

The Standards Committee also agreed the format of their decision notices, whether case summaries would be published on the Council’s website, and when to tell the subject Member that a complaint has been submitted about their behaviour.

► **Review of Local Assessment Procedures** – The Standards Committee also agreed that these practices should be reviewed after three months of operation. To ensure that all questions and issues raised by the Sub-Committee Members were recorded a standard item was added to each Sub-Committee agenda, titled ‘Lessons to Learn’. The issues raised were then used to inform the review process. Some of the issues raised by Members were not able to be resolved satisfactorily as they were either direct from legislation or from statutory guidance. However Members were presented with a report on all the issues that had been raised, along with possible amendments, during their meeting on 16th December 2008.

In addition, officers distributed questionnaires to all the complainants and subject Members who had been involved in the process since 8th May 2008 and asked for their comments on their experiences. These

responses, along with general representations from some of the political groups, were considered by the Standards Committee.

The Standards Committee made a series of amendments to their procedures as a result, and have agreed to review their procedures again in September 2009 to assess whether these changes have improved the process as a whole.

- ▶ **Raising awareness of the Local Assessment Process** – Every authority was required to publish a notice detailing where the complaints should be sent from 8th May 2008, and what the Council's new responsibilities are.

The Standards Committee chose to do so through the following media:

- Council's website - by updating the existing page of information on how to make complaints about misconduct, and through a Council press release. The information on the Council's website has been viewed 865 times since June 2008.
- Placing a notice in the Yorkshire Evening Post, and an article in the Council's own newspaper "About Leeds". Notices in public areas such as local libraries and the Council's information centre.
- An article in "Governance Matters".
- Contact Centre Staff are also able to advise members of the public about the new arrangements.

The Standards Committee also chose to send relevant information to all the Citizen's Advice Bureau in Leeds so that they could assist members of the public with completing complaints form where necessary.

The Committee also created an information leaflet for potential complainants and a specific complaints form, which is available via the Council's website and distributed in hard copy when requested. They

also agreed that a special complaints helpline, email address and online form should be created for complainants to use.

In order to raise awareness amongst Members and officers:

- a letter and copy of the information leaflet was sent to all Parish and Town Councils in the area;
- a briefing note was sent to each of the political groups;
- a seminar was provided to officers within Democratic Services; and
- information about local assessment has been included in all training on the Members' Code of Conduct, including the compulsory Governance updates for Members of Planning and Licensing Committees.

► **Training and Guidance for Members of the Sub-Committees** – In order that Members of the Standards Committee were prepared for their role on the Assessment and Review Sub-Committees, the Committee amended their training plan to include a separate skill area on Local Assessment. In February 2009, the Committee considered further updates to their training plan which included a training day on Local Assessment and Standards Committee Hearings from an external facilitator. The Committee has also sought to ensure that the external members of the Committee are aware of the role of a City Councillor, and has agreed that external members of the Committee could be given the opportunity to attend the ward surgeries of City Councillors to observe.

The Sub-Committees are also provided with a set of guidance notes for their reference when considering allegations of misconduct against Members. These include a locally created Assessment Flowchart and Code Matrix which assist Members in ensuring that all the assessment criteria are considered and that the allegation is a potential breach of the Code of Conduct. These documents were formally adopted by the Committee at their meeting in December 2008.

Providing Guidance and Training

The Standards Committee has a special responsibility for ensuring that Members are trained in matters relating to the Code of Conduct and arranging for appropriate training to be provided. During this year, the Standards Committee has both reviewed and recommended training for City Councillors and Parish and Town Councillors.

- ▶ **Induction for City Councillors** – The Standards Committee has supported the induction training programme for new Members; all new Members received the required training on the Code of Conduct and had completed their Acceptance of the Code of Conduct and Register of Interests forms.
- ▶ **Governance Matters** - The Standards Committee also features heavily in the regular bulletin ‘Governance Matters’ which is distributed to all Members of the Council, Directors, Chief Officers and all officers within Legal, Licensing and Registration, Procurement and Democratic Services. This bulletin contains a ‘spotlight on’ section which provides advice on specific standards or governance issues, front page news and feedback from the Council’s governance committees. There have been 21 issues so far, they are published on a bi-monthly basis and are available to download from the Council’s website¹.

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http://www.leeds.gov.uk/Council_and_democracy/Councillors_democracy_and_elections/Council_documents/Governance_Matters_Newsletter.aspx

Relationship with Parish and Town Councils

The Standards Committee has sought to develop its relationship with the Parish and Town Councils in the Leeds area during this municipal year.

- ▶ **Addressing the results of the Annual Audit** - The Standards Committee asked each Parish Clerk to complete a questionnaire at the end of 2007, which asked questions about their register of interests, how interests are declared and recorded and what training the Parish Councillors had received on the new Code of Conduct. The results of the audit were considered by the Monitoring Officer, the Chair of the Standards Committee and the Parish and Town Councillors at a meeting on 16th December 2008. The Committee decided that those Councils who were of concern to the Monitoring Officer should be offered support and assistance by Leeds City Council, and other Parish and Town Councils. The Clerks from these Councils will be invited to a meeting with the Monitoring Officer, Chair of the Standards Committee and the Parish and Town Councillors on the Committee in order to discuss their results and how the Committee can assist them. Those whose results had some weaknesses but were not of particular concern to the Monitoring Officer will be offered further training on the Code of Conduct from Leeds City Council and more guidance on personal and prejudicial interests. Finally, the Committee agreed that those Councils who had good results would be congratulated and asked whether they would wish to assist their fellow Councils with any issues they may be facing.
- ▶ **Parish and Town Council Conference** – Representatives from the Parish and Town Council Liaison Forum and officers of Leeds City Council organised the second Parish and Town Council Conference in Leeds this year. This took place on 13th May 2009 at Civic Hall. Officers updated the delegates on the rules surrounding the declaration and registration of interests, and briefed them on the role of Assessment and Review Sub-Committees. The delegates were even

able to try some cases for themselves, to assist them with understanding the new process and how the Code of Conduct applies in different circumstances.

- ▶ **Training for Parish and Town Councillors** – In October 2008 the Standards Committee received a report from the Member Development Officer updating them on progress with the project to review learning and development provision for parish and town councillors. As the role of Parish Councillors is extremely varied, the report put forward a number of learning options; some joint with City Councillors, and others specifically tailored and delivered on an area basis. The Standards Committee decided that training should be provided jointly with City Councillors, that Parish and Town Clerks should also be offered training, and that training on planning and financial awareness should be prioritised. The Standards Committee also sought to encourage Parish and Town Councils to discuss their requirements with officers to ensure that the correct training was being offered.

Working with Other Agencies

During the year, the Standards Committee has taken part in research and policy development on a national scale through various consultation exercises.

- ▶ **Consultation and Research** – Members of the Standards Committee have responded to the consultation paper published by Communities and Local Government called “Codes of conduct for local authority Members and employees: a consultation” in December 2008. It is hoped that the relevant Orders will be in place by May 2009.
- ▶ **Local Government Chronicle Awards 2009** - The Standards Committee submitted an entry to the ‘Standards and Ethics’ category of the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2009, much of which was drawn from the Standards Committee Annual Report and the Council’s Corporate Governance Statement for 2008. It was announced in November 2008 that the Council had been shortlisted.
- ▶ **The Centre for Local & Regional Government Research** - In March 2008, the Standards Board for England commissioned Cardiff University to assess the impact and effectiveness of the ethical framework in local government. The research is being carried out over five years using in-depth case studies of nine local authorities. Leeds City Council was selected to take part and accepted. It will focus on the impacts of standards frameworks on processes, systems, cultures and values within local government. The project will also use public surveys and focus groups to explore any impacts of local standards frameworks on levels of public trust in local government.

Case study work is being conducted with Councils at two-yearly intervals, the first round of which took place in September 2008. This included interviews being conducted with Members, key officers, local stakeholders and public focus groups.

► **Standards Board for England** - The Chair of the Standards

Committee and the Monitoring Officer attended the Seventh Annual Assembly of Standards Committees held by the Standards Board for England on 13th and 14th October 2008, which provided opportunity for training and guidance and also feedback to the Standards Board on their work. The Chair of the Standards Committee was also a member of the steering committee for this year's conference, and was a speaker on the issue of the leadership and skills required of the Independent Chair. The Chair was also asked to appear in a DVD package to be shown to the delegates, where various Standards Committee members from different local authorities were asked to comment on several current ethical issues.

As finalists for the LGC award mentioned above the Chair of the Standards Committee has also appeared in a short film published on the Standards Board for England website². The film concentrates on examples of good practice in Leeds and in the other shortlisted authorities.

Finally, officers from Leeds City Council have also been involved in piloting the Standards Board for England Annual Return which will collect data to supplement the monthly returns regarding local complaints. The Standards Board will use this information to assist authorities and to identify good practice.

The Standards Committee is kept up to date on national conduct issues by receiving regular Standards Board Bulletins and issues of the Town and Parish Standard. The Standards Committee also received and considered the Standards Board's Annual Report at their meeting in October 2008.

► **Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce)** - The Chair of the Standards Committee is a

² Available to view at <http://www.standardsboard.gov.uk/Resources/Standardsandethicsaward/>

Director of AIMScE. The Association provides support and guidance to independent members in carrying out their statutory responsibilities, and also acts as a forum for exchanging views and ideas with other organisations and stakeholders.

Issues for 2009 – 2010

The Standards Committee will have many important issues to address in the coming the year, including the following:

- ▶ **Implementation of the Ethical Audit Action Plan** – The action plan formulated by the Standards Committee during this municipal year will continue to be implemented and monitored by the Standards Committee throughout the new municipal year.
- ▶ **Increased interaction between the Standards Committee and the Council’s leadership** – The Chief Executive and the leaders of the Council’s political groups will attend some meetings of the Standards Committee during this year to explain their roles and to explain what they are doing to improve ethical governance in their areas of responsibility.
- ▶ **Implementation of the new Member and Officer Codes of Conduct** – The Standards Committee will recommend the adoption of the new Members’ Code of Conduct to the Full Council, consider whether to add any local provisions, and provide guidance to the Council on the adoption of the new model Employee Code of Conduct. The Standards Committee will also devise a training plan to ensure that all Members are aware of the provisions of the new Code of Conduct.
- ▶ **Retirement of the current Chair** – The current Chair of the Standards Committee, Mike Wilkinson, ends his final term of office a the Annual Meeting in 2010. The Council are due to appoint a reserve Independent Member at the Annual Meeting in 2009 to fill the vacancy for an Independent Member that will arise in 2010. However, during this municipal year, the Standards Committee will need to appoint a new Chair from its membership.

Useful Links

If you would like to find out more about standards issues and the work of the Committee, as well as keep up to date with national issues, you may find the following links useful:

- ▶ **The Standards Board for England** (for guidance on standards issues, standards committees and outcomes of recent cases)
www.standardsboard.gov.uk
- ▶ **The Adjudication Panel for England** – www.adjudicationpanel.co.uk
- ▶ **The Audit Commission** – www.audit-commission.gov.uk
- ▶ **Department for Communities and Local Government** –
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/>
- ▶ **Leeds City Council** – www.leeds.gov.uk
- ▶ **National Association of Local Councils** – www.nalc.co.uk
- ▶ **Yorkshire Local Council Association** -
www.visionwebsites.co.uk/Contents/Text/Index.asp?SiteId=490&SiteExtra=13134021&TopNavId=459&NavSideId=5536
- ▶ **Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy** –
www.ipf.co.uk
- ▶ **Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England** – www.aimsce.org.uk

Parish Councils

The Standards Committee has a special responsibility to the Parish and Town Councils in Leeds. The Standards Committee is responsible for ensuring high standards of conduct are met within the parishes and that every Member is aware of their responsibilities under the code of conduct.

The Parish and Town Councils in the Authority's area are:

Aberford & District	Collingham with Linton	Morley
Allerton Bywater	Drighlington	Otley
Alwoodley	East Keswick	Pool-in-Wharfedale
Arthington	Gildersome	Pudsey
Austhorpe	Great and Little Preston	Scarcroft
Bardsey Cum Rigton	Harewood	Shadwell
Barwick in Elmet & Scholes	Horsforth	Swillington
Boston Spa	Kippax	Thorner
Bramham cum Oglethorpe	Ledsham	Thorp Arch
Bramhope and Carlton	Ledston with Ledston Luck	Walton
Clifford	Micklefield	Wetherby
Wothersome (Parish Meeting)		

The Monitoring Officer

In Leeds City Council, the role of the Monitoring Officer rests with the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance). The Monitoring officer has a key role in promoting and maintaining standards of conduct.

As well as acting as legal advisor to the Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer carries out the following functions:

- ▶ reporting on contraventions or likely contraventions of any enactment or rule of law and reporting on any maladministration or injustice where the Ombudsman has carried out an investigation;
- ▶ establishing and maintaining registers of Members' interests and gifts and hospitality;
- ▶ maintaining, reviewing and monitoring the Constitution;
- ▶ advising Members on interpretation of the Code of Conduct;
- ▶ supporting the Standards Committee;
- ▶ receiving reports from Ethical Standards Officers and decisions of case tribunals;
- ▶ conducting investigations into misconduct;
- ▶ performing ethical framework functions in relation to Parish Councils;
- ▶ acting as the proper officer for access to information;
- ▶ making arrangements for relevant matters to be considered by the Standards Committee with regard to initial assessment, review, consideration of final investigation reports and hearings, and to advise the Standards Committee on such matters;
- ▶ advising whether executive decisions are within the budget and policy framework; and
- ▶ advising on vires issues, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity, and budget and policy issues to all Members.