

# **Annual returns Questions**

Confidence in local democracy

## Independent overview

1.1 Does the standards committee have Terms of Reference?

Yes / No

1.2 What help do members receive on following the Code of Conduct?

1.3a Does the standards committee have a forward work plan?

Yes / No

If No, go to Q1.4a

1.3b If yes at Q1.3a, who outside of the standards committee is involved in agreeing the forward work plan? Please explain below.

1.4a Is the standards committee given a role in reviewing amendments to the authority's constitution (or standing orders where appropriate)?

Yes / No

If No, go to Q1.5

1.4b If yes at Q1.4a, when was the last review undertaken and what was the standards committee's role in the review? Please explain below.

1.5 Standards committee meetings

Please use the table below to indicate how many times between 01 April 2008 and 31 March 2009 the standards committee has met and for what reasons.

Reason for meeting	Number of times met between 01 April 2008 to 31 March 2009
General meeting of whole standards committee	
Training	
Assessment sub-committee	
Review sub-committee	
Consideration meeting	
Hearing	
Other	

## **Standards committee – annual report**

2.1a Does the standards committee produce an annual report on its own work?

Yes / No

If No, go to Q3.1

2.1b If Yes at 2.1a, is the annual report received by a meeting of the full authority?

Yes / No

2.1c If Yes at 2.1a, is the annual report sent to all members?

Yes / No

2.1d If yes at 2.1a, is the annual report sent to all senior officers?

Yes / No

2.1e If yes at 2.1a, how is the annual report publicised to the general public?

## **Standards committee - promoting standards**

3.1 What else does the standards committee do to communicate its role and the importance of high standards internally within the authority to members and officers?

3.2 What else has the standards committee done to promote confidence in local democracy to the wider public?

3.3a Has the authority, or the standards committee in particular, considered how it will monitor and ensure high standards of behaviour when the authority is working in partnership with other organisations?

Yes / No

If No, go to Q4.1a

3.3b If yes at 3.3a, please provide examples.

## **Standards committee – training**

- 4.1a Between 01 April 2008 and 31 March 2009, has the authority assessed the training and development needs of members in relation to their responsibilities on standards of conduct?

Yes / No

If No, go to Q4.2

- 4.1b If yes at 4.1a, what training and development needs were identified?

- 4.2 Please provide a list of training and development opportunities that have been provided to members and officers in the period 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009 that are relevant to ensuring high standards.

Your list should include any training that relates to the operation of the local standards framework e.g. local assessment and hearings.

## **Leadership**

- 5.1 How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the chief executive to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01 April 2008 to 31 March 2009)?

None  
Once  
Two  
Three  
Four  
Five or more

Please also provide an overview of what the meetings were about.

- 5.2 How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the leader of the council to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01 April 2008 to 31 March 2009)?

None  
Once  
Two  
Three  
Four  
Five or more

Please also provide an overview of what the meetings were about.

- 5.3 How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the other party group leaders to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01 April 2008 to 31 March 2009)?

None  
Once  
Two  
Three  
Four  
Five or more

Please also provide an overview of what the meetings were about.

- 5.4 Does the standards committee, or its chair, have regular access to the monitoring officer? How regular?

- 5.5 How many times in the last year (from 01 April 2008 to 31 March 2009) has the standards committee chair been invited to address a full authority meeting?

None  
Once  
Two  
Three  
Four  
Five or more

- 5.6a Does the monitoring officer sit on the Corporate Management Team, or equivalent?

Yes / No

If Yes, go to Q5.7.

- 5.6b If no, please describe in what ways, if any, the monitoring officer has access to the corporate management team.

- 5.7 Has an executive member (or senior member where appropriate) been given portfolio responsibility for standards?

Yes / No

## Complaints

- 6.1 Can the public access information, from the authority website, about how to make a complaint against a member?

Yes / No

- 6.2 What else has the authority done to advertise the complaint process on member conduct to the general public?

- 6.3a Has the authority sought feedback from any of those people involved in an allegation of member misconduct about their satisfaction with the member conduct complaint process?

For example has the authority sought feedback from the complainant, witnesses or person against whom the allegation was made? Please choose from responses below.

No, have not received any member complaints

No, have not sought feedback

Yes

- 6.4 How does the authority communicate the outcome of investigations into member conduct to:

a) members

b) officers

c) the general public

- 6.5 In allegations into member conduct which have NOT resulted in investigation, such as those allegations which have not been referred for investigation and those which have resulted in other action, how does the authority communicate the outcome to:

a) members

b) officers

c) the general public

## **Member officer relations**

7.1a Does the authority have a protocol for relations between members and officers?

Yes / No

If No, go to Q7.2

7.1b If yes at Q7.1a, how is the protocol communicated to officers and members?

7.1c If yes at Q7.1a, what is the mechanism for reviewing the effectiveness of this protocol?

7.2 Does the authority include training on the importance of high standards of behaviour in the inductions of new members and officers?

Yes / No

7.3a Does the authority have informal mechanisms for dealing with member/officer and member/member disputes?

Yes / No

If NO, go to Q8.1a.

7.3b If yes at Q7.3a, please provide details of any mechanisms and, if possible, provide an example where this has been used.

## **Registering member interests**

8.1a Is the member register of interests accessible to the public on the authority website?

Yes / No

If Yes, go to Q8.2

8.1b If NO at 8.1a, please briefly explain whether there is any particular reason why not.

- 8.2 Is the register of gifts and hospitality available to the public on the authority website?  
Yes / No
- 8.3 What does the authority do to signal to members the importance of declaring interests and completing the register of interests and the register of gifts and hospitality?

## **Officer conduct**

- 9.1 Does the authority have a code of conduct for senior officers?  
Yes / No
- 9.2a Does the authority compile a register of senior officers' interests?  
Yes / No  
If NO, go to Q9.3a
- 9.2b If yes at 9.2a, is the register of senior officers' interests available to the public on the authority website?
- 9.3a Does the authority compile a register of senior officers' gifts and hospitality?  
Yes / No  
If No, go to Q10.1
- 9.3b If yes at Q9.3a, is the senior officers' register of gifts and hospitality available to the public on the authority website?  
Yes / No



Thank you for completing the annual return.

The following questions are optional; you do not have to complete them if you do not wish to. However, this information would be useful to us in helping us to raise ethical standards.

## **Optional questions**

10.1 On what issues, if any, would you appreciate more support or guidance from the Standards Board for England?

10.2a The Standards Board for England, the Improvement and Development Agency and the Audit Commission have developed a toolkit that authorities can use to assess the ethical governance arrangements in their authority, and also to identify improvements.

Has your authority used the ethical governance toolkit?

Yes / No

10.2b If no at Q10.2a, has your authority considered using the ethical governance toolkit?

Yes, the authority has considered using the toolkit and plans to do so in the future

No, the authority has not given any consideration to using the toolkit  
(please give reasons in the space provided)

Yes, the authority has considered using the toolkit and decided not to use it  
(please give reasons in the space provided)

10.2c ..... space to expand on response to question 10.2b