

Appendix 2

Eric Pickles, then Conservative Shadow Minister for Local Government, said the following shortly before the general election in 2005:

...we believe that the Standards Board should be abolished, and we shall do that in our first month in office. We shall seek to repeal the secondary legislation within the first year. District auditors will continue to play their role in investigating financial impropriety in local government and the local ombudsman will continue to investigate complaints made by the public about administrative failures. The police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts will take the lead in investigating and prosecuting any breaches of criminal law.

Existing civil law will cover such issues as libel and slander by councillors. We will repeal the codes of conduct for councils and replace them with light-touch advice on declaring personal and prejudicial issues. That will ensure that there is a simpler, straightforward transparency in the conduct of councillors.

What should the sanctions be? If councillors do not meet the highest standards of conduct, which the electorate expect of them, the electorate will take the opportunity to vote them out of office through the ballot box. Alternatively, the councillor may choose not to present themselves again for public office or the political parties may choose not to sponsor that candidate for election.²³