
**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON
STANDARDS ISSUES**

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CLERK

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the second annual report to have been prepared on the work of the Committee, on standards matters.
- 1.2 The report will be used to complete the tick box annual return questionnaire issued by Standards for England.

2. Membership

The Committee is comprised as follows:-

- 5 Members (Councillors Bell, Clark, Haley, M. Forbes and Wodwark).
- 3 Independent Members (Mr. G.N. Cook – Chairman, Mr. J.P. Paterson – Vice Chairman and Miss G. Goodwill).

3. The role of the Standards Committee

The main purpose of the Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members, including Co-optees. The detailed terms of reference are set out in the Authority's Constitution.

4. Meetings

The full Committee will have held 3 meetings during the course of the year.

5. Matters Considered

Like other Fire and Rescue Authorities with relatively small membership there have been no matters of concern raised or hearings held in the last year.

The Committee has considered the following matters:

5.1 **Changes to the Code of Conduct**

The Government has indicated that there is insufficient parliamentary time to make further changes to the Code of Conduct until after the election.

5.2 **Training**

5.2.1 **Standards for England Conference**

This training event was attended by the Monitoring Officer, the Chairman of the Committee and Miss Goodwill.

A summary of the conference is reported elsewhere on this agenda.

5.4.2 **“Other Action”**

The Committee will consider a report on “other action” elsewhere on this agenda and is recommended to adopt the guidance and incorporate it in the handbook within the Authority’s Constitution..

5.4.3 **Training for Other Members**

Training on the Code of Conduct will, be offered to any new Members on induction in June 2010.

6. **Local Assessments**

There have been no local assessments. However, three Members of the Committee have general experience of these through their role on Sunderland City Council’s Standards Committee.

7. **Relationships**

(i) Other Standards Committee

I have continued to organise occasional meetings of Chairs of Standards Committees and their respective Monitoring Officers in the region to share experiences and develop good practice.

(ii) Members

Advice is given to Members on queries and on declarations of interest.

8. **Register of Interests**

In the interests of transparency the register of interests continue to be available to be accessed electronically on the Authority’s website.

Members are sent a copy of their interests during the course of the year to check that their entries are up to date.

9. Conclusion

The Committee is requested to note the report.

