

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. Membership

7 members of the authority.

Also 2 co-opted non-voting members of Parish Councils in the Council's area (a Parish Member, who is not also a member or officer of the Council or Somerset County Council).

2. Functions

To consider and make recommendations to the Council on:

- 2.1 the adoption and revision of its Codes of Conduct and Protocols.
- 2.2 revisions required to the Constitution.

3. To exercise delegated powers, on behalf of the Council, in relation to the following functions;

- 3.1 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members.
- 3.2 to advise, train or arrange to train Members and Co-opted Members of the Council on matters relating to the Authority's Members' Code of Conduct and wider propriety issues, including issuing guidance where appropriate.
- 3.3 recommend the adoption or revision of any Council Codes of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members, and to monitor the operation of such code(s) of conduct including making recommendations for change.
- 3.4 deal with the assessment and determination of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct relating to Members and Co-opted Members (other than where the power to deal with such matters has been delegated to and exercised by the Monitoring Officer).
- 3.5 where the investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and a local resolution is not appropriate or not possible, then a Hearing Panel of the Committee (comprising 3 voting members of the Standards Committee agreed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Committee Chairman) will consider and decide the complaint.
- 3.6 to take decisions in respect of a Member and Co-opted Member who is found on hearing to have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, including –
 - Reporting its findings to Council [or to the Parish Council] for information;
 - Recommending to the member's Group Leader that he/she be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;
 - Recommending to the Leader of the Council that the member be removed from the Executive, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities;
 - Instructing the Monitoring Officer to [or recommend that the Parish Council] arrange training for the member;
 - Removing [or recommend to the Parish Council that the member be removed] from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the Authority [or by the Parish Council];
 - Withdrawing [or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws] facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access;

- Restricting contact to named officers or requiring contact be through named officers; or
 - Excluding [or recommend that the Parish Council exclude] the member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

- 3.7 to keep under review the Council's constitution and make recommendations to Council for changes to the Constitution.

- 3.8 to exercise overview of the "Whistle-blowing policy".

- 3.9 to exercise overview of complaints handling and Ombudsman Investigations.

- 3.10 to exercise overview of the Council's protocols for District Council member/officer relations and Gifts and Hospitality in relation to officers and District Council Members and to regularly review those Protocols.

- 3.11 To grant dispensations on the following grounds:
 - That, without the dispensation, the representation of different
 - political groups on the body transacting the business would be so upset as to alter the outcome of any vote on the matter. This assumes that members are predetermined to vote on party lines on the matter, in which case, it would be inappropriate to grant a dispensation to enable them to participate; that the Authority considers that the dispensation is in the interests of person living in the Authority's area.
 - That the Authority considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.