

Appendix 2

5. Standards Committee

There will be a *Standards Committee* of 11 members comprising:-

- (i) Nine *Councillors*
- (ii) Two non-voting *Parish Members* elected by the District's parish and town councils
- (iii) One Co-Opted Member

The committee will be politically balanced.

Independent Persons

The Council will appoint two Independent Persons who will be consulted by the authority before it makes a finding as to whether a member or co-opted member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or decides on action to be taken in respect of that member.

They may also be consulted by the Authority in respect of a standards complaint at any other stage and by a member or co-opted member of the District Council or of a parish or town council against whom a complaint has been made.

The functions of the Standards Committee include:

- Advising the Council on the adoption of or revision to the Members' Code of Conduct.
- Monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct and promotion of high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Council.
- Oversee Member Training, (including the attendance of Members at courses), in relation to matters affecting their conduct and probity including relevant information provided to newly elected District Councillors.
- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct within town/parish councils and to assist them in following their own Codes of Conduct or adopt the North East Code of Conduct.
- Oversee training provided to Parish Councils on conduct and probity matters including relevant information provided to newly elected Parish Councillors
- Oversee the public face of the Standards Committee through the website and increase public awareness of the Code of Conduct and its application.
- Granting dispensations to allow *Councillors* and co-opted members to take part in meetings where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

- Receiving regular reports from the Monitoring Officer on the number of complaints against members, how they are progressing, what decisions have been made and what action taken.
- Through the Hearings Sub-Committee, undertaking hearings into complaints which have been investigated and deciding on sanctions where a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct has been found.
- Oversee matters referred to the Monitoring Officer in relation to complaints against Town and Parish Councillors where it is inappropriate for the Monitoring Officer to take a decision.
- Overseeing the whistle blowing policy.
- Overseeing complaints handling and outcomes of Ombudsman investigations.
- Review Members' attendance at meetings on a bi-annual basis.
- Receiving annual reports on gifts and hospitality received by Council members and officers.
- Receiving annual reports on the Council's operation and use of the powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and to approve amendments to the policy as necessary.
- Receive reports of the Independent Remuneration Panel prior to Council submission.
- Undertaking an annual review of the Council's Constitution, making recommendations to the Council meeting.
- Provide an annual written report to Council on the work of the Committee