

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND THE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

At the last meeting of Council Forum it was reported that the Standards Committee has adopted a framework for the promotion of good ethical governance for the Borough to continue to improve standards in public life. The framework includes the following:

- an increased public awareness of the role of the Standards Committee and the Local Standards Framework by the development of a webpage on the Council's intranet/internet,
- the development of an "ethical standards roadshow" to promote good ethical governance both with elected members and staff employed by the Council and its partners as well as accessing the community and members of the public for instance via Neighbourhood Boards,
- regular features to be printed in The Shuttle and Teamtalk,
- awareness raising of good ethical standards at Council Meetings such Executive Board and meetings of the full Council;and
- meetings with the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, Group Leaders with the Monitoring Officer and Chair at least annually.

The Framework aims to help support the principles of good governance set out in the Councils Code of Corporate Governance. It will also demonstrate to the External Audit, and Inspectors under the Comprehensive Area Assessment, how the local authority promotes and demonstrates the principles and values of good governance. As chair of the Committee I gave an undertaking that together with the Monitoring Officer I would meet with the Group Leaders to consult with them on the proposals allow them the opportunity to comment in more detail on the proposals. These meetings have now been held and I am please to say that the programme will now be rolled out with the support of a Task group formed by the Standards Committee.

2. STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND CORPORATE PLAN 2009/12.

The Standards Committee received a copy of the Standards for England Corporate Plan for 2009/12. The Plan set out the mission and objectives for Standards for England on a three-year rolling basis and is updated every year. The Plan took stock of its performance over the past 12 months and looked forward to the challenges and opportunities of the coming years.

3. NORTH WEST INDEPENDENT MEMBERS FORUM

The Forum was established to give Independent Members of Standards Committees a support network and the opportunity to meet with colleagues from other Councils to discuss standards issues. Presently the Lead Authority for the Forum was Lancashire County Council.

Lancashire County Council has reviewed its position as lead authority and has reluctantly concluded that it was unable to continue providing secretarial support to the Forum.

On behalf of the Forum Lancashire County Council was seeking expressions of interest for an authority to host the next meeting and provide support. The Standards Committee resolved that it was not able to support the Forum and has written to Lancashire County Council informing them of this.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Terms of Office of three independent members were scheduled to conclude on 24th November 2009 and 4th December 2009.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair extended to each of the members an invitation to continue for further terms of office. All three indicated that they wished to continue and left the room while their requests were considered.

The Committee resolved to ask the Council to confirm the appointments of the following Independent Members for the Terms stated:-

Valerie Webb and Sue Entwistle until 24th November 2013; and
Valerie Miles until 4th December 2012.

5. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

This year the Committee was be represented at the Annual Assembly on 12th and 13th October 2009 by a representative of the Monitoring Officer and Mrs Valerie Webb, an Independent Member of the Standards Committee. A full report will be given to the next meeting of the Forum.