

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **Ethical Governance**

Work is underway to construct an Ethical Governance and Standards Committee web page for the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council website.

At the last meeting of the Standards Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010, Members viewed a website demonstration and were asked to provide feedback on the draft web page.

The following headings were currently available on the page:

- Ethical Standards Committee Feedback
- Making a complaint
- Other issues for discussion by the Committee
- Our commitment to high ethical standards
- Questions
- Standards for England
- Council Codes and policies

Useful feedback was received on useful links and documents that could be incorporated into the website and once the website has been finalised Members of the Committee will have a further opportunity to comment, prior to final sign off by myself in May 2010 after the elections have taken place.

### **Training**

At the last meeting, Members had training using the Standards for England DVD 'Assessment made clear' which had been designed to help Standards Committee members and Local Authority Officers involved in the assessment of complaints about elected or co-opted Members.

Dramatised case studies were used to demonstrate the criteria that would guide each decision, including whether an investigation should be conducted locally, or referred to Standards for England. Discussions took place during and after each case study, in which Members sought advice from the Monitoring Officer, in relation to the case study scenarios.

### **Recruitment Process for new members**

The Committee currently has a vacancy for an Independent Member and also for a Parish Member, and these vacancies will be publicised via the Shuttle, the Council website and Darwen Town Council and the Parish Councils will also be informed of the vacancies.

### **Guidance from the Standards for England**

The Committee has received the latest guidance from Standards for England on registering gifts and hospitality and the code of conduct.

**Standards for England Annual Review 2008-2009: Local Standards;  
National Perspectives**

Standards for England have published their Annual Review 2008-09.

The review sets out the results of Standards for England's monitoring activities, revealing how the reformed local standards framework is operating in practice. It further notes the ongoing work of Standards for England in positioning itself as a strategic regulator