



Annual return

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Submit Form

You can submit your return once all of the compulsory sections (1 – 9) are complete. A green tick next to the section headings below indicates that it is complete. If any of the sections are incomplete you can jump to them by clicking on the heading.

<u>Section 1</u>	Independent overview	✓
<u>Section 2</u>	Standards committee – annual report	✓
<u>Section 3</u>	Standards committee - promoting standards	✓
<u>Section 4</u>	Standards committee – training	✓
<u>Section 5</u>	Leadership	✓
<u>Section 6</u>	Complaints	✓
<u>Section 7</u>	Member officer relations	✓
<u>Section 8</u>	Registering member interests	✓
<u>Section 9</u>	Officer conduct	✓
<u>Section 10</u>	Optional questions	✓

If you have completed all of the compulsory sections please click on the submit button at the bottom of the page to confirm. Your return information will then be automatically sent to the Standards Board. Here are some suggestions for what you can do with the annual return information once it is complete:

1. Print your information by selecting the print summary option from the menu bar.
2. Put the return on your website for the public to view. This would show transparency and is an opportunity to promote the work you are doing to integrate ethical



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Independent overview

Does the standards committee have Terms of Reference?

Yes No

What help do members receive on following the Code of Conduct?

Training seminars conducted annually
ad hoc advice from the monitoring officer always available

Does the standards committee have a forward work plan?

Yes No

Is the standards committee given a role in reviewing amendments to the authority's constitution (or standing orders where appropriate)?

Yes No

Standards committee meetings


Please use the table below to indicate how many times between 01/04/2008 and 31/03/2009 the standards committee has met and for what reasons.

Reason for meeting	Number of times met between 01/04/2008 and 31/03/2009
General meeting of whole standards committee	2
Training	1
Assessment sub-committee	1
Review sub-committee	0

Consideration meeting

Hearing

Other

Tick this box if section has been completed in full 

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Standards committee - annual report.

Does the standards committee produce an annual report on its own work?

Yes No

Is the annual report received by a meeting of the full authority?

Yes No

Is the annual report sent to all members?

Yes No

Is the annual report sent to all senior officers?

Yes No

How is the annual report publicised to the general public?

It is an open report on the Standards Committee Agenda

Tick this box if section has been completed in full



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Standards committee - promoting standards

What else does the standards committee do to communicate its role and the importance of high standards internally within the authority to members and officers?

Details of the ethical standards regime are placed on the Council's website including Registers of Interests, complaints forms guidance and procedures.

What else has the standards committee done to promote confidence in local democracy to the wider public?

Has the authority, or the standards committee in particular, considered how it will monitor and ensure high standards of behaviour when the authority is working in partnership with other organisations?

Yes No

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Standards committee - training

Between 01/04/2008 and 31/03/2009, has the authority assessed the training and development needs of members in relation to their responsibilities on standards of conduct?

Yes No

Please provide a list of training and development opportunities that have been provided to members and officers in the period from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009, that are relevant to ensuring high standards. Your list should include any training that relates to the operation of the local standards framework eg local assessment and hearings.

7th April 2007 - P Keith-Lucas
20th May Code of Conduct - Monitoring officer
9th June Data Protection FOIA and EIR - Monitoring Officer

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Leadership

How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the chief executive to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009)?

Two

Please also provide an overview of what the meetings were about.

Members' Standards
Registration of Interests
Members' Allowances

How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the leader of the council to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009)?

Two

Please also provide an overview of what the meetings were about.

General discussions on standards

How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the other party group leaders to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009)?

None

Please also provide an overview of what the meetings were about.

Does the standards committee, or its chair, have regular access to the monitoring officer? How regular?

Yes: Meetings not diarised but around twenty meetings or telephone discussions take place in a year.

How many times in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009) has the standards committee chair been invited to address a full authority meeting?

None

Does the monitoring officer sit on the corporate management team, or equivalent?

Yes No

If no, please describe in what ways, if any, the monitoring officer has access to the Corporate Management Team.

Informal access to its members

Has an executive member (or senior member where appropriate) been given portfolio responsibility for standards?

Yes No

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Complaints

Can the public access information, from the authority website, about how to make a complaint against a member?

Yes No

What else has the authority done to advertise the complaint process on member conduct to the general public?

Placed advert in local newspaper
Details on council website
Details in customer service centre

Has the authority sought feedback from any of those people involved in an allegation of member misconduct about their satisfaction with the member conduct complaint process?

For example has the authority sought feedback from the complainant, witnesses or person against whom the allegation was made? Please choose from responses below.

No, have not sought feedback

How does the authority communicate the outcome of investigations into member conduct to:

a) members

b) officers

c) the general public

In allegations into member conduct which have NOT resulted in investigation, such as those allegations which have not been referred for investigation and those which have resulted in other action, how does the authority communicate the outcome to:

a) members


only to member concerned

b) officers

not at all (only one complaint - not investigated)

c) the general public

not at all (only one complaint -not investigated)

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Member officer relations

Does the authority have a protocol for relations between members and officers?

Yes No

How is the protocol communicated to officers and members?

Document in the Council's constitution - referred to in training on Code of Conduct

What is the mechanism for reviewing the effectiveness of this protocol?

Reviewed when constitution or code of conduct is reviewed

Does the authority include training on the importance of high standards of behaviour in the inductions of new members and officers?

Yes No

Does the authority have informal mechanisms for dealing with member/officer and member/member disputes?

Yes No

Please provide details of any mechanisms and, if possible, provide an example where this has been used.

With the express prior agreement of both sides informal meeting arranged between member and officer concerned with MO present.

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Registering member interests

Is the member register of interests accessible to the public on the authority website?

Yes No

Is the register of gifts and hospitality available to the public on the authority website?

Yes No

What does the authority do to signal to members the importance of declaring interests and completing the register of interests and the register of gifts and hospitality?

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Officer conduct

Does the authority have a code of conduct for senior officers?

Yes No

Does the authority compile a register of senior officers' interests?

Yes No

If yes, is the register of senior officers' interests available to the public on the authority website?

No

Does the authority compile a register of senior officers' gifts and hospitality?

Yes No

is the senior officers' register of gifts and hospitality available to the public on the authority website?

Yes No

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Optional questions

The following questions are optional; you do not have to complete them if you do not wish to. However, this information would be useful to us in helping us to raise ethical standards.

On what issues, if any, would you appreciate more support or guidance on from the Standards Board for England?

The Standards Board for England, the Improvement and Development Agency and the Audit Commission have developed a toolkit that authorities can use to assess the ethical governance arrangements in their authority, and also to identify improvements.

Has your authority used the ethical governance toolkit?

Yes No

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standards in your authority. Please email authorityreturns@standardsboard.gov.uk for more detailed information about how to do this.

3. Show it to the chair of your standards committee.
4. Take it to the standards committee and full council.

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