

STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17**STANDARDS COMMITTEE****10 July 2017****COUNCIL****26 July 2017****CLASSIFICATION:****Open****WARD(S) AFFECTED****All Wards****Tim Shields
Chief Executive**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report gives an overview of the work and activities of the Standards Committee over the past year and provides information on the monitoring of the Members' Code of Conduct.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Standards Committee considers the Annual Report for 2016/17, as attached at Appendix 1, and endorse it for submission to Full Council.**
- 2.2 **That Full Council notes the Standards Committee's Annual Report for 2016/17, as attached at Appendix 1.**

3. RELATED DECISIONS

- 3.1 This is the fifth Annual Report of the Standards Committee established by the Council on 1 July 2012.

4. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES

- 4.1 This report sets out the work and activities of the Standards Committee over the previous municipal year and therefore does not contain any potential financial implications.

5. COMMENTS OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR, LEGAL

- 5.1 The Council has a legal duty under the Localism Act 2011, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of Members and co-opted Members in public office.

- 5.2 The Council therefore established a Standards Committee to help promote and uphold high standards of conduct amongst Members and co-opted Members.

6. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 6.1 This Annual Report is submitted to Council in line with best practice for the Council to maintain an overview of the work of the Standards Committee. This is the fifth Annual Report of the Standards Committee established by the Council following implementation of the Localism Act 2011 and the introduction of related ethical governance arrangements.

- 6.2 In upholding high standards the Committee monitors and makes recommendations on the Members' Code of Conduct and considers complaints made under the Code.

6.3 The Standards Committee during 2016/17 undertook work in the following areas, which are explained in further detail in Appendix 1 of this report:

- Annual Report on Compliance with Guidance on Members' Use of ICT
- Review of the Register of Members' and Co-optees Declaration of interests
- Review of the Members' Training and Development Programme
- Safety arrangements for Member surgeries

Tim Shields
Chief Executive

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Standards Committee Annual Report 2016/17

Report Author	Tess Merrett, Governance Services
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**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17**

Introduction from Councillor Anntoinette Bramble, Chair of the Committee for 2016/17 and Cabinet Member for ethical governance matters

This report provides an overview of the Committee's work in the 2016/17 Municipal Year, in what was the Committee's fifth year since its establishment by the Council following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011. This Annual Report outlines the key areas of work undertaken by the Committee during 2016/17 as well as looking at future work and challenges.

This is my first annual report since taking on responsibility for this Committee last year. I am pleased to report that Members and co-opted members continue to uphold high ethical standards and that the ethical governance framework introduced in July 2012 is well embedded. I am also pleased to report that the refreshed Members' training programme has recently been launched and I have received some positive feedback already from Members.

It is again regrettable that the opposition parties have decided again not to take up their place on the Standards Committee for the 2016/17 Municipal Year. The Committee functions in an independent and non-party political way. It will continue to retain the places for the opposition parties in the hope that they will be taken up.

2. Membership

For 2016/17, membership of the Committee was as follows:

- Cllr Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Committee, resigned from the Council on 9 June 2016;
- Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Deputy Mayor, Elected Chair of the Committee at its meeting on 15 February 2017 (following Cllr Sophie Linden's resignation)
- Six non-executive Council Members – Councillors Katie Hanson, Ben Hayhurst, Clayeon McKenzie, Sally Mulready, Clare Potter and Jessica Webb (vice-chair); and
- Six non-voting co-opted members – Julia Bennett, George Gross, Adedoja Labinjo and Onagete Louison (plus two vacancies).

- There remains One Conservative and one Liberal Democrat vacancy on the committee.

The table below outlines Members' and co-optees' attendance at meetings of the Standards Committee meetings during the 2016/17 Municipal Year. As ever, Members and co-optees had a large number of alternative commitments such as other public meetings, ward commitments, representing the Council on outside bodies and work commitments, and were therefore not always available to attend every meeting of the Committee. However, there was high attendance at the Committee meetings during 2016/17.

Member	25/05/16 Extraordinary meeting	21/07/16	15/02/17* *re-scheduled from 12/01/17
Julia Bennett	N	P	P
Cllr Sophie Linden	P	N Resigned as Councillor and Committee Chair on 9 June 2016	N
Cllr Anntoinette Bramble	N	N	P Elected as Chair of the Standards Committee
George Gross	N	P	P
Cllr Katie Hanson	P	P	P
Cllr Ben Hayhurst	P	P	P
Adedoja Labinjo	N	P	A
Onagete Louison	N	P	P
Cllr Clayeon McKenzie	N	P	A
Cllr Sally Mulready	P	A	P
Cllr Clare Potter	P	A	P
Jonathan Stopes-Roe	N	P	P
Cllr Jessica Webb (Vice Chair)	P	P	P

Key:

P = Present

A = Apologies for absence

N = Not required to attend

3. Terms of reference 2016/17

The Standards Committee operated within the following terms of reference for 2016/17 Municipal Year, which went to the Standards Committee meeting on 21st July 2016:

The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high ethical standards at the Council. The Standards Committee is responsible for the following functions:

1. To review and maintain oversight of the Council's ethical framework and procedures and make reports and recommendations accordingly;
2. To review and maintain oversight of the conduct of Members and co-opted members of the Council and assist them in upholding high ethical standards;
3. To advise Full Council and its Committees on the adoption of a Members' Code of Conduct, codes of practice and protocols relating to ethical governance matters;
4. To hear and consider complaints made against Members and co-opted members under the Code of Conduct, codes of practice or protocols;
5. To adopt procedures for considering complaints made under the Code of Conduct, codes of practice or protocols;
6. To consider whether to grant applications for dispensation to Members and co-opted members, in accordance with Members' Code of Conduct; and
7. To maintain oversight of ethical governance training provided to Members and co-opted members and make reports and recommendations accordingly.

4. Members' Code of Conduct

All Members on their election to office and co-optees on their appointment are required to sign a declaration confirming that they will abide by the Members' Code of Conduct. It is important for them to have good knowledge of the requirements of the Code. Similarly, officers who work directly with Members and co-optees need to have a good understanding of the Code in order to give Members effective support.

The Committee is pleased with the support and training provided to Members on the Code of Conduct and believes that it helps contribute to the high ethical governance standards demonstrated by Members and Co-optees of

the Council. It is expected that Members and Co-opted Members will attend refresher sessions during the next Municipal Year. The Committee will continue to monitor training on the Code of Conduct to ensure that high standards continue.

5. Member Induction, Training and Development Programme

The Committee received a report at its meeting on 15 February 2017 updating the Committee on the Members' Training and Development Programme. The programme's aim was to provide the necessary training and tools to Members to enable them to reach their full potential in their various roles as Councillors. The change in approach had come about as a result of Mayor Philip Glanville's commitment last September to launch a review of how Councillors are supported. The training is now more focused with the emphasis on a more individual approach to training to meet Members' needs and aspirations. A dedicated Members training page has been created and is expected to go live shortly. This will include links to all the main components, including the Local Government Association and Local Government and Intelligence Unit learning hub, dates of briefings and back to floor session, PDP templates and guidance, as well as key contacts.

At the 15 February 2017 Standards Committee meeting members noted that with the briefings it was a challenge trying to strike the best balance between getting the best attendance levels and holding them on dedicated nights. Annual reviews were conducted of the training and consultations which had been provided by the various relevant authorities e.g. the Metropolitan Police Service.

Committee members welcomed the new training programme. Work would continue to improve the various ways to support Councillors in their professional and personal development.

A number of courses had been run between September 2016 and March 2017. These courses included:

- Planning Training
- Code of Conduct
- Overview and Scrutiny Training
- Housing and Planning Act Training
- Police and Personal Safety Training
- Recycling 2020 Training
- Housing Advice Training
- Mental Health First

Positive feedback had been received from Members particularly for the session on mental health, housing and personal safety.

6. Review of Register of Declaration of Interests Forms

The Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 requires all local authorities to adopt a Code of Conduct and for all its all Members and voting co-optees to complete and return a declaration of interests form.

The Localism Act 2011 also places an obligation on all local authorities to promote high ethical standards in public office. Regulations also require Members and Co-optees to be transparent and declare all disclosable interests on their declaration of interest form.

The Committee received a report on this subject at its meeting on 15th February 2017. The Committee noted that the declaration of interest forms are held in a hard copy register and on the Council's website. Having reviewed the forms, the majority of Members have been keeping their forms updated. There was a small number of Councillors who have not updated their forms since 2014, and they had been sent a reminder to send in an updated form if there had been any changes.

8. Complaints about Member Conduct

Jonathan Stopes-Roe continued to serve as the Council's Independent Person on ethical governance matters. A report will be considered by full Council at its 26th July 2017 meeting to re-appoint him for a further 4 year term.

There was one complaint received under the Members' Code of Conduct that were referred to the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee and no further action was recommended.

9. Guidance for Members on Use of ICT – 6th Annual Report

The Committee received a report at its meeting on 15 February 2017 on Compliance with Guidance on Members' Use of ICT. The Committee noted in the report, that there had been one reported breach during the Municipal year of 2015/16. There had only been three known or reported breaches since the commencement of annual reporting to the Standards Committee in 2013.

There was one reported breach of the Guidance on Members' Use of ICT in 2016/17 which was referred to the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee and no further action was recommended.

The Committee was also briefed on the refresh of the Council's guidance for Members' uses of ICT, which would ensure that the Council's guidance is up to date with current systems and the latest UK Government guidance. The revised policy had been designed to avoid adding disproportionate technical

restrictions which can lead to people taking risks. In addition the refreshed policy will include guidance on use of social media, reasonable use of services and would also be reviewed to consolidate the number of policy documents.

10. Dispensation Requests

Under the Council's dispensation Procedure, the Standards Committee is responsible for considering requests for dispensations on the grounds that it is in the interests of residents or that it is otherwise appropriate to grant dispensation for some other reason.

There were no requests for dispensation put to the Standards Committee during the 2016/17 period.

11. Conclusion

The Standards Committee has now been in operation for five years following its establishment by Council. The Committee remains dedicated to maintaining high ethical standards in Hackney and supporting Members and co-optees in doing so. The Committee is pleased to see that the current framework is operating successfully and the Committee believes that Council Members and co-optees continue to demonstrate high ethical standards.

The Committee's ongoing focus will be to support Members to ensure that they are fully aware of the principles of the Code of Conduct and to monitor attendance at training and completion of Register of Interests' forms.

I thank the four co-optees of the Committee for their assistance and hard work on the Committee and the Independent Person, Mr Jonathan Stopes-Roe, for his contribution to our work.

Councillor Anntoinette Bramble
Chair of Standards Committee 2016/17