

Article 10 – Standards Committee

10.01 Standards Committee

A Standards Committee may be appointed by Council each year at the first business meeting of the municipal year.

10.02 Form and Composition

- (a) **Political Balance.** The committee is required to have proportional political balance.
- (b) **Parish Councils.** Representatives from the town and parish councils within the borough will be asked to assist the Standards Committee where the Monitoring Officer deems it appropriate. The Standards Committee will appoint the relevant town or parish council representative(s) on a case by case basis as (a) non-voting member(s) of the committee.
- (c) **Membership.** The Standards Committee shall comprise of no more than twelve members in total. The composition of each Committee will be decided on a case by case basis.
- (d) **Parish members.** Where representatives from town and parish councils within the borough are asked to assist the Standards Committee in accordance with (b) above, those representatives will be expected to be present when matters relating to any town or parish council or their members are being considered but are not entitled to vote. (See also 10.03 below).
- (e) **Chairing the Committee.**

The chairman shall be appointed by the Council at the first business meeting of the new municipal year or such other meeting called for that purpose.

10.03 Sub-committees of the Standards Committee

The Monitoring Officer has the power to appoint a sub-committee known as a “Hearing Panel” to consider complaints about members. The chair of the sub-committee will be appointed on an ad-hoc basis at the commencement of each meeting.

Composition of the Hearing Panel will be considered on a case by case basis and may include town and/or parish council representatives in a non-voting capacity. (See also 10.05 below).

10.04 Role and Function

The Standards Committee has the following role and functions:

- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors, co-opted members, town and parish councillors and officers;
- (b) assisting councillors, co-opted members and town and parish councillors to observe the [Codes of Conduct for Elected Members](#);
- (c) advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code of Conduct for Elected Members and town and parish councillors;
- (d) monitoring the operation of the Codes of Conduct;
- (e) advising, training or arranging to train councillors, co-opted members and town and parish councillors on matters relating to the Codes of Conduct for Elected Members;

- (f) granting dispensations to councillors, co-opted members and town and parish councillors from requirements relating to interests set out in the Codes of Conduct for Elected Members;
- (g) the exercise of (a) to (f) above in relation to the town/parish councils wholly or mainly in its area and the members of those councils;
- (h) determination of allegations received in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and supporting regulations; and
- (i) the granting and supervision of exemptions from politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

10.05 Independent Person

In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 full Council shall appoint an Independent Person to assist the Monitoring Officer, Standards Committee and members with the determination of complaints about members, co-opted members and town and parish councillors.

This appointment shall follow a process of public advertisement, application and selection.

The Independent Person is not a member of the Standards Committee, or of any of its sub-committees (Hearing Panels), but may attend meetings of the Standards Committee and is invited to attend all meetings of the Hearings Panel. The views of the Independent Person must be sought and taken into consideration before the Standards Committee takes any decision on whether the member's conduct constitutes a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

More detailed information on the role of the Independent Person and his/her involvement in the investigation of complaints is contained in the [Protocol relating to the Independent Person](#).