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## Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

### Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010

Subject: Standards Committee Annual Report 2009/10

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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### Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Standards Committee Annual Report, in line with the request of Members that this Committee receive six monthly update reports on the work of the Standards Committee. The Annual Report is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Standards Committee Annual Report 2009/10. The report is attached at Appendix 1.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The terms of reference of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee include the function to “review the adequacy of Council’s Corporate Governance arrangements”, which includes the arrangements to ensure the appropriate conduct of Members and officers.
- 2.2 In order to support this function Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, at its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2006<sup>1</sup>, requested that the Standards Committee produce a report on their work to be presented to this committee every 6 months.
- 2.3 At the Standards Committee meeting of the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006<sup>2</sup> that committee agreed that the annual report would be presented to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, to constitute one of these 6 monthly updates.
- 2.3 The fifth annual report was approved by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010, and is due to be considered by full Council on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 The following section of the report summarises the content of the Standards Committee Annual report.

### **3.2 The Work of the Committee 2009-2010**

The section regarding the work of the Committee is categorised in the same way as last year’s annual report, into issue areas which reflect the Committee’s terms of reference. However a section on politically restricted posts has been added to incorporate this additional area of responsibility for the Standards Committee. The content is also broadly similar to the 6 monthly report which the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee received on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

- 3.3 Promoting, monitoring and reviewing the codes of conduct
- Reviewing the Codes and Protocols
  - Ethical Audit
  - Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality
  - Officer Code of Conduct
- 3.4 Local assessment of complaints
- Assessment and Review Sub-Committees
  - Consideration and Hearings Sub-Committees
  - Review of local assessment arrangements
  - Training and guidance for members of the sub-committees
- 3.5 Providing guidance and training
- Governance Matters

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<sup>1</sup> See Minute 60 of the meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

<sup>2</sup> See Minute 91 of the meeting of the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

- First-Tier Tribunal (Local Government Standards in England) – Decisions of Case Tribunals

### 3.6 Relationship with Parish and Town Councils

- Addressing the results of the Annual Audit
- Parish and Town Council Liaison Forum

### 3.7 Politically Restricted Posts

- Procedure for Politically Restricted Posts
- Applications for exemption from Political Restriction

### 3.8 Working with other agencies

- Local Government Chronicle Awards 2010
- The Centre for Local & Regional Government Research
- Standards for England
- Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce)

### Issues for 2010 - 2011

- 3.9 The potential work of the Committee for the next municipal year is summarised at the end of the report.

These issues are outlined below:

- Member and Officer Codes of Conduct
- Induction of the new Chair
- Recruitment Process
- Increasing understanding of local assessment

## **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

- 4.1 There are no implications for Council policy.

- 4.2 By producing a report which details its work throughout the year, and the principal decisions it has taken, the Standards Committee is promoting transparency in its actions.

- 4.3 The annual report is also a method by which Members and officers can be informed of the Standards Committee's role and its inputs and outputs. This is an objective of the Committee's communication plan which seeks to cascade regular information to Members and officers.

## **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal or resource implications.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The publication of this annual report will support the Council's governance arrangements by promoting transparency in the Standards Committee's actions and help fulfill its communication plan.

6.2 By receiving and noting this report the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee will be undertaking its function to review of the adequacy of the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 Members are asked to note the Standards Committee Annual Report 2009/10 as set out in Appendix 1.

### Background Documents

- Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) to Corporate Governance & Audit Committee, "Standards Committee Update Report", 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010
- Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) to Standards Committee, "Standards Committee Annual Report 2008/09", 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010