

Article 9 – The Standards Committee

9.01 Standards Committee

The Council meeting will establish a Standards Committee.

9.02 Composition

- (a) **Membership.** The Standards Committee will be composed of:
- Six district councillors (only one of whom may be a member of the District Executive), appointed proportionally;
- (b) **Independent persons.** Independent persons to be invited to Committee meetings but will not be entitled to vote;
- (c) **Parish members.** Three parish council representatives nominated by the parish councils to be co-opted as non-voting members of the Committee;
- (d) **Chairing the Committee.** The Committee shall be chaired by a District Councillor

9.03 Role and Function

The Standards Committee has the following terms of reference:

- promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members;
- advise, train or arrange to train Members and Co-opted Members of the Council on matters relating to the Authority's Members' Code of Conduct and wider propriety issues, including issuing guidance where appropriate;
- recommend the adoption or revision of any Council Codes of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members, and to monitor the operation of such code(s) of conduct;
- deal with the assessment and determination of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct relating to Members and Co-opted Members (other than where the power to deal with such matters has been delegated to and exercised by the Monitoring Officer). Where the investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and a local resolution is not appropriate or not possible, then a Hearing Panel of the Committee (comprising 3 voting members of the Standards Committee agreed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Committee Chairman) will consider and decide the complaint.
- to take decisions in respect of a Member and Co-opted Member who is found on hearing to have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, including –
 - Reporting its findings to Council [or to the Parish Council] for information;
 - Recommending to the member's Group Leader that he/she be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council (other than the relevant Area Committee);
 - Recommending to the Leader of the Council that the member be removed from the District Executive Committee, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities;

- Instructing the Monitoring Officer to [or recommend that the Parish Council] arrange training for the member;
 - Removing [or recommend to the Parish Council that the member be removed] from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the authority [or by the Parish Council];
 - Withdrawing [or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws] facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access;
 - Restricting contact to named officers or requiring contact be through named officers; or
 - Excluding [or recommend that the Parish Council exclude] the member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.
- advise on the management of statutory and other registers of interest and gifts / hospitality received;
 - advise the Council on possible changes to the Constitution (except the Council and Cabinet Schemes of Delegation) in relation the key documents and protocols dealing with members conduct and ethical standards;

Note: the powers of the Committee apply in respect of the district and parish councils, except where stated.

- To grant a dispensation to a Member of SSDC with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or prejudicial interest to enable that Member to (i) participate (ii) vote or (iii) participate and vote in relation to the matter which gave rise to the DPI or prejudicial interest in relation to Nos. 2, 3 and 5 below and to determine any appeals against the Monitoring Officer's refusal to grant a dispensation in relation to Nos. 1 & 4
 1. That so many members of the Committee have DPI or prejudicial interests in a matter that it would "impede the transaction of the business". This usually means that the decision-making body would be inquorate as a result;
 2. That, without the dispensation, the representation of different political groups on the Committee would be so upset as to alter the outcome of any vote on the matter;
 3. That the Standards Committee considers that the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area;
 4. That, without a dispensation, no member of the District Executive Committee would be able to participate on this matter (i.e. because the Executive would be inquorate); or
 5. That the Standards Committee considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.